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BOSTON
INSIDE OUT.

BY REV. HENRY MORGAN.

PART I.

BOSTON
AMERICAN CITIZEN CO.
7 BROMFIELD STREET.

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BOSTON INSIDE OUT:

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

BY

REV. HENRY MORGAN.

BOSTON :

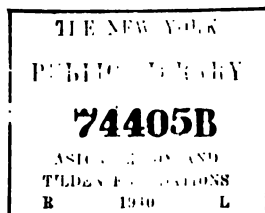
AMERICAN CITIZEN CO.

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Catholic church, Roman C.S., 1911



INTRODUCTION.

In presenting this volume to our readers, we offer no apologies for the bald truths which it contains. Every character in the story is real, and all are known to many of the intelligent citizens of Boston.

The Father Titus (fictitious name), the Rose Delaney, the Dr. Forceps — in fact, every character, is on record in the Boston courts in connection with the crimes of the story. “Father Titus” is dead ; but several of the others still live.

A well-known Republican politician and lawyer of Boston has all the facts on file in his office—he being the attorney for John Delaney.

We believe the reprinting of the story at this time —

when it was supposed to have been suppressed by Rome
— will serve as a warning to the too-confiding dupes of
Jesuitism.

BOSTON INSIDE OUT.

CHAPTER I.

OUTWARD BOUND.—GILDERSLEEVES OF BEACON HILL.

"I swan!" said Jonathan Jerks. "What an everlastin' crowd. Should think everybody was a goin' ter the Paris Exposition. Hullo! Is that you, Sam Slocum? Why, how du you du? Come down ter see a fellow off, hey? That's right clever, now, I swow ter gracious! Well, good by, good by! Take care of yourself, my boy. Remember me ter all the folks. Tell Gaddy I'm goin' ter bring her somethin' pooty from Paris. Good by! Good by!"

The speaker stood in the gangway of the English steamer just clearing for Liverpool. He was a genuine Yankee from the Old Granite State, with all the peculiarities of that nearly extinguished character; with its keen, native shrewdness, its original sly humor, its sturdy independence, together with the added characteristic which he had of twisting his head, twitching his eye and jerking his hand as if turning a crank.

Beside him stood a man of an opposite stamp. He belonged to what may be called the "ornamental" order of society. He was foppishly dressed, and fairly glittered with diamonds and jewelry. His features were soft and effeminate, his hair was parted exactly in the middle, his corn-colored moustache was tastefully curled at the ends. His affected manner and his eye-glass constantly in hand, together with the embroidered slippers usually on his feet, obtained for him the cognomen of "Eyeglass Slippers."

I was standing by the companion-way when he approached and said, with a lisp and a fashionable drawl, —

"Ah! There ith no doot thotheity in America. No culture except in Boston. Oh! how I long for *la belle France!*"

Just then a fine-looking elderly gentleman, with an unmistakable air of good breeding and high social standing, got out of a carriage which had driven up at great speed, and hastily approached the

steamer. He was followed by a young man of twenty or thereabouts, whose resemblance to himself at once proclaimed close relationship. They were Augustus and Frank Gildersleeve, father and son. A bell at that moment sounded.

"We are just in the nick of time, Frank," said the father, edging his way through the opposing tide of visitors who were hurrying to make their exit from the steamer. "I hope your mother and sister have had no delay. I trust they have got on board."

"They are here, father," said the young man, "for there comes their escort, Mr. Sparkler."

"How do, Mr. Gilderthleeve!" said Mr. Sparkler, otherwise "Eyeglass Slippers," as he met them. "How do, Frank? Mrs. Gilderthleeve and Mith Gertwood are awaiting you in the thaloon."

Down in the saloon Gertrude Gildersleeve at this moment was conversing with a short, stout man, whose smooth, beardless face and clerical garb proclaimed him to be a priest. His sleek, unctuous countenance was lighted up with a pleasant and agreeable smile as he listened to Miss Gildersleeve.

"This is indeed a great surprise, Father Titus," she said, while the priest still held her hand. "You are going, then, to Europe with us?"

"Yes, my child," returned the priest. "I am on my way to Rome for a brief visit, and to pay my obeisances to the holy father. We shall have an opportunity for many pleasant conferences during the voyage, I sincerely trust, my daughter."

"Yes, dear father," said Gertrude, who, it should be said, had been partially educated at a fashionable school in Boston, over which Father Titus exercised some supervisory control, "nothing could have given me more delight than the benefit of thus having the advantage of your counsels. For oh! father, there is much that I wish to ask you."

Poor Gertrude! She was starving for the spiritual bread of life. One look from that priest was a benediction to her.

"You are advancing in grace, I see, my daughter; but I must leave you for the present, as I perceive your father and brother are coming this way."

So saying, the priest departed hurriedly, going up on deck, where the last signal is just sounding.

And now ensues the usual affecting parting scenes. Now the last word is said, the last fond caress exchanged. The monster ship throbs with the moving machinery. Her head slowly turns to the



sea. The band strikes up the sadly-tender strains of "Sweet Home," changing to "A Life on the Ocean Wave," as amid the shouts and cheers and waving of hats and handkerchiefs from the hundreds who lined the pier, the steamer majestically glides out into the channel.

A tender had been chartered to accompany us down the harbor with music and song, giving cheer upon cheer. But many a heart was too sad to respond; each looking back toward friends and homes now receding, perhaps forever, from view.

"I swanny!" said Jonathan Jerks to me, as we stood leaning against the taffrail, straining our eyes to catch the last glimpse of the fast-receding shores, — "I swanny! I never felt so bad to leave home before in my life."

And the honest Yankee brushed away a tear as he spoke.

"Shust how I feels mineself," said a stout German, shaking his head sorrowfully. "I hash ter leave mine vrow Katerina, und der leedle vons; und it make me vot you calls homeshick. Yaw, das ish so!"

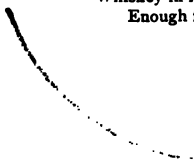
That night, in my cabin, I found that ocean travel subjects one to strange companions. The steamer was unusually crowded. Occupying the berth over mine was a whiskey trader, from Frankfort, Ky., a son of the Emerald Isle. He was carrying home samples of his distilled poison to introduce to his relatives and acquaintances living on the "old sod."

In the berth beside the Irishman was a Cuban slaveholder, who spent the voyage in drinking brandy and decrying America. He and Jerks had many a sharp tilt. There was also a wealthy brewer from California.

Each of these persons had provided himself with liquors in boundless profusion. Cases and trunks containing whiskey and brandy filled every available space. The first business of the night was to unload the liquors. Soon glasses were clicking, and bottle after bottle was emptied. Under the influence of the stimulants, all hands, utter strangers a few hours before, were hobnobbing, laughing, and talking like old friends.

For the first time in my life I had a keg of whiskey tied to my bedpost. In fact, I was surrounded by whiskey. My situation can best be described in the words of Tennyson, slightly varied: —

"Whiskey to right of me,
Whiskey to left of me,
Whiskey in front of me,
Enough for six hundred!"



I noticed that Jerks withstood all invitations to drink, though he mingled in the conversation.

"I swow!" he whispered to me, with his habitual jerk of the head and twitch of the eye, "this is what you call high life, I suppose. High life with a vengeance I should say. If you will take my word for it, neighbor, two-thirds of the folks on this boat are seasick, and the sicker they get the more they drink. Just look at these men now. The ship heaves, and—so do they. Then they take another swig of whiskey, then heave ho, again!"

Jerks was a comical genius, full of anecdote and story, and made himself at home in any company. He was a man of varied information, and possessed of such plain common-sense, dashed with a vein of homely philosophy, that he was seldom worsted in an argument. Generally he got the best of it. That jerk of the hand of his was an argument in itself. It carried conviction in every gyration.

As the voyage lengthened, Jonathan became a popular personage with all on board. The bonds of social restraint are relaxed during a sea-voyage. In cabin and on deck gambling and drinking were indulged in openly and without stint.

"Look a-here, Mr. Gildersleeve," said Jerks, one day, "this is another phase of high life, I suppose! They don't drink and bet money like this 'ere in Boston, do they?"

"Well, not quite so publicly, perhaps," said Mr. Gildersleeve, good-humoredly, "but men's passions and appetites are probably the same in Boston as they are elsewhere."

"But I have allers been told that law and decency are better observed and more strictly enforced there than in other cities," said Jonathan. "Now, I've been pooty well over the United States, and I swan! I never yet saw any worse contempt for the ordinances and decencies of respectable society, even on board a Mississippi flat-boat, than on this here steamer! Look athere now!"

The Yankee pointed to a group of three or four gentlemen seated at a table in the smoking-room. They were playing cards. Little heaps of silver and gold before them, told that their sport was far from being an innocent one.

Standing near by, and watching the fluctuations of the game with an eager, absorbed interest, was young Frank Gildersleeve.

"Look a-there, now," continued Jerks. "Just see how your son is interested in that game of cards. A likely young lad Mr. Frank seems to be; honest, good-tempered, and, I should judge,

high-minded, too; but ef he was a boy of mine, sir, I should hate to see such a temptation as that placed often in his way. See how his eyes kindle! See how he bends over them gamblers! Just as ef his very soul was on fire to take a hand in the game. I beg pardon, sir, but ef I was you I wouldn't lose no time in giving him a caution about ever playin' a card for money."

"No need of asking pardon, friend Jerks; I take no offence at such well-meant freedom," said Augustus Gildersleeve; but Jonathan's words had evidently disquieted him. "Frank is above the usual temptations of his age. He has always money at command, and need never try such a foolish and desperate hazard as gambling to fill his purse."

Nevertheless, Mr. Gildersleeve did not fail to talk long and earnestly with his only son on the subject before they retired that night.

Jerks saw with equal concern that the young man was assailed by another temptation, which he felt less free to mention.

He saw that Mr. Gildersleeve habitually used wine and liquors at table, and that Frank was never checked or admonished when following his father's example.

"That boy has got a genuine taste for strong drink, I swanny!" said Jonathan to himself, shaking his head and twitching his hand as usual when very much in earnest, "and I lose my guess ef he don't succumb to it, unless somebody gives him a powerful warnin'. Too bad! too bad! I swan, I'm half a mind to speak to the lad myself. It's no use sayin' anythin' to Mr. Gildersleeve. The mother, too, is one of them hard, cold, fash'nable sort of women. It is plaguey little good, sound, motherly counsel young Frank ever gits from her, I'll guarantee."

"What are you muttering about so earnestly, Mr. Jerks?" said a sweet voice at his elbow.

Turning, Jonathan perceived the smiling, beautiful face of Gertrude Gildersleeve.

She was very young, hardly seventeen, and somehow she had taken a great liking to the honest Yankee.

Gertrude's sweet disposition, unspoiled notwithstanding the influence and teachings of a fashionable mother, had charmed Jerks from the first. Between Jonathan and the young heiress, therefore, a singular but none the less sincere confidence had already sprung up.

"You were saying something about my dear brother, Mr. Jerks,"

Gertrude went on, in a sportive tone. "I am sure I heard you mention his name in your self-communings."

"Well, yes, I must allow you are right, Miss Gertrude," said Jonathan. "I was thinkin' what a smart, manly young fellow your brother Frank was."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerks, for praising my dear brother. I am very fond of Frank, and like to hear him spoken well of."

She said the words so gently, and with such a tender affection beaming in her dove-like eyes, that Jerks really envied Frank Gildersleeve.

"I was only regrettin' one thing about Mr. Frank," Jonathan continued.

"And what is that, dear Mr. Jerks?"

"That I fear he has got strong passions which oughter have as strong a curb. But I am forgettin' myself, Miss Gertrude. This isn't a proper subject to bring to a sister's knowledge."

"And why not?" said Gertrude, earnestly, and placing her little hand on her companion's arm. "Surely, anything that concerns an only brother's welfare is of deepest interest to a sister. I love my brother very dearly, Mr. Jerks; and no one would strive for his good more earnestly and prayerfully than myself."

"Then I beseech you, my dear young lady," answered Jonathan, with deep feeling, "to warn Mr. Frank against what I am afraid is his besetting sin."

"Ah! you refer to his habit of drinking wine?"

"Yes, Miss Gertrude, your innocent life has never had exhibited or brought home to you the evils of a habit which grows by what it feeds on, until, in nine cases out of ten, it leads its poor victim to an untimely and an unhonored grave."

At moments of strong feeling, Jonathan insensibly elevated his language, almost entirely dropping his usual vernacular style.

"I have never thought of such a thing in connection with Frank," said Gertrude. "Though I never take wine myself, because, perhaps I have a natural distaste for it, yet from childhood I have been so familiar with seeing it used before me, that I have never associated with it such evils as you describe. But oh! I thank you, Mr. Jerks, more than I can express! I will speak to Frank, and urge him with all the power of a sister's love, to give up such a dangerous practice,—but there is my mother beckoning to me."

And with a sweet, though somewhat sad smile, the young girl left him and joined Mrs. Gildersleeve.

"Gertrude," said that lady, in severe tones of reproof, "I wonder what you can see so attractive in that man. I am surprised and mortified beyond measure at your conduct. Remember your position and station, my child. The daughter of Augustus Gildersleeve associating with a pork merchant, or a low, ignorant farmer, or whatever he may be! For shame!"

"But Mr. Jerks is neither low nor ignorant, mamma," said Gertrude, sweetly; "and besides, General Grant was only a tanner, and that dear, noble Abraham Lincoln was a canal boatman. And you know, dear mamma," she added with an arch look, "that Grandpa Gildersleeve started very low down in the social scale."

Mrs. Gildersleeve did not deign to make any reply to this home-thrust; and, during the remainder of the voyage, she forebore to return to the subject.

In due time we arrived in Liverpool.

"Hullo!" said Jerks, as we walked along toward our hotel, "what's this old fellow a doin'?"

He pointed to an elderly, well-clad man, sitting, hat in hand, on the sidewalk, while artistically chalked in large letters in front of him was the word "ADVERSITY."

"I swanny!" cried Jonathan, "is this the way they beg in England? Why, sir, you couldn't hire a *Yankee* to sit there. No, sir! He'd creep 'round an' say, 'Help me out o' this 'ere poverty ef yer can, but for the land's sake, don't tell nobody.'"

Jerks wondered at the people being so accommodating. Jonathan, on asking for a street, name of hotel, or where to find a carriage, was delighted to find them so obliging.

"Wal, I swow!" said Jerks, fervently, "ef they don't even hold out their hands to welcome a fellow to England. Course I ask 'em 'how de du?' an' 'how's their folks at home?' 'cause a feller's got to be civil, you know. Wal, I never see such obligin' set of people."

Walking through the poverty-stricken quarter of Liverpool, we saw the terrible effects of intemperance. Nearly every face we met was red and blotched, showing signs of constant dissipation. Here there were hundreds of people who never have a fire, who live mostly on beer and stronger drink.

"Here's the strongest kind of a temperance lectur'," said Jonathan. "I swan, ef it ain't a burnin' shame ter the name of civilization."

Here, too, we saw woman's utter degradation. Women, coarse and bold, would go up to the bar and cry, "Say, Sal, what'll ye take?" with all the *nonchalance* of an old toper.

"Oh, give me some Old Tom gin or whiskey straight," would be the reply, and thereupon they would drink to more than beastly excess.

"By hokey!" cried Jerks, "jes' look a-there."

Two bar-maids were disputing in the street, calling each other the vilest names. Then squaring off, man-fashion, they struck and clinched till their faces were battered and streaming with blood.

"Great Gosh! that's the first time I ever saw women at fisticuffs," exclaimed Jonathan. "Ef that ain't the worst sight I ever looked on! By gracious, jes' look at 'em. A regular prize-fight, now ain't it?"

The women kept at it for some time, drawing a large crowd around them, among the spectators being two or three police officers.

"Stop 'em! stop 'em!" cried Jonathan, swinging his hands and jerking his body in his excitement. Finally a man seized one of the women. This was the other's chance. She sprang, struck, yelled, and, woman-like, went in for the last word and the last blow.

"Hullo!" said Jerks, as he went on, pointing to a rum-shop across the way, "du you see that liquor den over there?"

I nodded.

"Wal, sir, captain says that 'ere place is owned by the Mayor of Liverpool. By cracky! How a man that's got any soul can sell liquor, and a magistrate at that, I can't see," cried Jonathan. "Why such a man makes half the misery, woe, and crime of the world. Jes' to think of the squalid wretchedness, bruised faces, ruined children in this great city brought on by drink. I swan; I wouldn't have 'em point to me and say, 'At your door lies this wrong'; no, not for all the world!"

From Liverpool we went to London. Among other things, Jerks was not well pleased with the English Church establishment.

"We Americans don't believe in the union of church and state," said Jonathan. "We tried it once, you know, tu hum, in New England. The state took the sinners into the church to vote. Soon the sinners outnumbered the saints; then turned the saints out of doors, took the churches, and have kept them ever since."

One Sunday we visited eleven churches in London.

"Great Geewhility!" said Jerks, as he caught sight of the great dome of St. Paul's. "Wal, I swow! ef that ain't some punkins, now!"

We entered the vast chancel, and took seats with the scanty few within.

"Guess they hain't got a very pop'lar preacher, by the looks of things," said Jonathan; "seems like a meetin'-house with the meet-in' left out."

Jonathan summed up the result of our various visits as follows. Taking out his memorandum-book, he said, with a whole battery of jerks and grimaces, —

"Took a list of all those places, jest for curiosity, so's to show the folks tu hum, you see. Now look a-here, won't this 'ere sound cur'ous to our church-goin' people," and Jerks proceeded to read from his notes: "St. Paul's, largest church in England, communion service, twenty-nine persons, and six priests to conduct the services. At twelve o'clock, sixty-four persons and seventy-four paid ministrants at the altar; twelve of these were priests and sixty-two singers. By Jiminy! more officers than soldiers. Ef that don't beat all! At St. Margaret's, only five persons in the congregation. All I could see, 't any rate! Perhaps rest were asleep. Paid that 'ere woman pew-opener sixpence to git a seat. Went against the grain, that did. St. Martin's had only six worshippers; St. Nicholas, seven; St. Vedest, nine; St. Magdalene, nineteen; St. James', twenty-two persons in choir, and twenty in pews; St. Anthony's, two hundred persons. An' that was the largest congregation we saw, except at Westminster Abbey, and the eleven-o'clock preaching service at St. Paul's.

"Now that's a mighty poor showin' for piety, we'd call it in America," continued Jonathan. "Ef that's a fair sample of the eight hundred and seventy-two London churches of what they call the *established* faith, I dont see what in thunder they want so many for! No wonder the congregation's so small! By Jiminy! All these 'ere churches supported by the state, too! Why, every man, woman, and child, at that rate, must cost upwards of a thousand dollars, jest for a few hours of public worship! I saw in a newspaper that the Bishop of London alone got a salary equal to the President of the United States. Jest think of that, now! Then that same bishop has charge of all these 'ere churches, with the hull caboodle of officers. See here! I tuk it all down in this 'ere book of mine. There's deans, archdeacons, prebendaries, canons, minor-canons, priest-vicars, rectors, by the hundred, and all drawing big salaries. What an army of do-nothin's fed at the altar! I tell you what," Jerks continued, working himself up into his usual energetic state, while head, eyes, and hand kept motion with his feelings, — "I tell you what, they'd oughter clean out these saps that's eatin' right

into the life of the nation. I'd jest like to turn the crank right on to 'em, an' clean 'em out, sir, clean 'em out!"

"Speaking of these churches," I said, "you must admit they are fine edifices, and show the taste of the people, while at the same time they beautify and adorn London."

"I'd ruther see the money they cost invested in raisin' up the poor and down-trodden people of this 'ere metropolis," said Jerks, "pullin' 'em out of the mire of beggary and degradation. Jest look at George Peabody, the American banker, giving two millions to London's poor. Now, ef some of London's big nabobs would follow that man's lead, you wouldn't see such a thing as I saw in the *Times* on'y yesterday."

"What was that, Jonathan?"

Jonathan again had recourse to his memorandum-book.

"Here it is; right out of the *Thunderer* itself: 'In England there are 350,000 children under the age of sixteen dependent on parochial maintenance. More than 100,000 criminals are annually let loose from prison to prey again on society. In this vast and wealthy city of London, there are over 100,000 boys and girls destitute of guardianship, destitute of food, clothing, and employment!' After that, talk of the magnificent churches and public buildings! Let England and the rest of the Old World build monuments. *I* glory in America, because she builds *men*! Look at those same monuments,—look at St. Pauls, where we went to-day; look at Westminster Abbey, and the rest of 'em. Why, they were most all of 'em built from the hard earnings of the poor. Here, I've got it all down in this 'ere book. St Paul's was built by a tax on coal. The burden always falls on the middle an' lower classes. They have been taxed an' crushed, to build up England's nobility.

"I tell you, America's nobility is her men; her wise, noble, God-fearin' men. Without them, shafts, bronzes, grand buildings, and marble statooes, are all a sham and a mockery. Them's my sentiments publicly expressed, as old Deacon Slocum used ter say way up in New Hampshire. I'm proud that I'm an American, an' I jest glory in America. There you won't find no crushin', grindin' airristocracy! No exorbitant rents! No titled nobility; no privileged class to grasp the chief honors; no sons of birth to crowd out and crush down the sons of toil; no landed monopolies to rob tenants of their fields an' turn 'em into huntin' grounds. There every man has a chance, an open field, an' a fair fight; he has land for his feet, a roof for his head, and a prospect for his children. I tell you what,

sir, for one, I've seen enough of London. Let's pull up stakes and go over to France to-morrow."

As this proposition coincided with my plans, I acceded to Jonathan's desire. The ensuing day we embarked from Dover for Calais. On the boat we found our old fellow-travellers, the Gildersleeves, and, thus once more united, we proceeded to Paris.

CHAPTER II.

PARIS OR BOSTON, WHICH? — JERKS, SLIPPERS, SUNDAY HORSE-RACE.

"Ha, ha, ha! Then you don't admire Paris?"

"No, I don't. I prefer Boston," said I.

"What! Ha! ha! Prefer Boston to Paris? That is strange," said Mr. Gildersleeve, at our Paris hotel. "What are your objections to Paris?"

"I object to its loose manners, its Sunday desecration, immorality, frivolity, and its disgusting street indecencies. Yet you call the Parisians the '*Politest people in the world*.' Sir, I have seen enough of Paris. I will not spend another day nor another dollar in such a vicious city."

"Why, Mr. Morgan, you don't know what you are talking about. Boston is more immoral than Paris."

I shook my head incredulously, and said, "Impossible! Boston may be wicked, but its wickedness is not so deep, so black; it don't, it can't compare with Paris."

"You are mistaken," said Mr. Gildersleeve, emphatically. "Go into the depths, and see as much of Boston as I have seen, and you will change your opinion. You ministers know but little of what is called '*Life*.' If we were in Boston I could show you a thing or two that would open your eyes, — show you that Boston is the most corrupt city in the world."

"What! Mr. Gildersleeve," I exclaimed. "You a Boston man, born in Puritan Boston, and your father before you. Can you thus denounce your native city? In what respect is Boston so corrupt?"

"In everything, — politics and religion. In Puritan CANT and hypocrisy. Puritanism teaches concealment, — drinking, gaming on the sly, crimes innumerable, vices unmentionable, all done in the

dark. Look at Boston's police records. Look at her dark array of crimes and criminals! Her army of quacks and charlatans."

"Then Paris presents better morals?"

"Yes, unquestionably. Here, men need not conceal, the unfortunate need not be under a ban."

I replied, "In other words, then, Paris seeks to repress vice and crime by open license. Look at some of her palaces, monuments to kings' mistresses, built to commemorate female depravity. Look at her art galleries, where the sensual school predominates. Look at her theatres, devoted to vile plays and viler operas. Look at her modern literature, in which vice is crowned with laurels. Look at her Sunday amusements, her Sunday horse-races. And yet, in the face of these facts, you call Paris a moral and perhaps a temperate city"

"Certainly, sir."

"Why, sir, the Parisians drink a hundred million gallons of wine yearly, fifty gallons to each person, that is a gallon a week to each man, woman, and child! To say nothing of the strong drinks, absinthe, rum, gin, whiskey, and the custom of mixing brandy with their coffee. Then look at her long list of suicides; look at her Morgue. As the proverb goes, 'You can't drag the Seine without fishing up a man.'"

"And you can't drag Charles River without fishing up a woman!" said Mr. Gildersleeve, emphatically. "I'll tell you, Bostonians don't know Boston's darker side; you don't understand Paris. Parisian society is sensible, philosophical. It is charitable toward human frailties. It does not attempt to gloss over such social crimes and weaknesses as are inseparable from human nature. It sees and recognizes their necessity. Thus in Paris men and women are frank even in their vices. They are not compelled to hide or conceal every peccadillo. In Boston you must cover up your shortcomings, play a part, wear a mask, assume a virtue if you have it not."

"Why, you don't claim that open transgression, barefaced license, are helps to public morals?"

"Yes, sir, I do. Men's passions are like a mill-stream. When you repress them they revolt. The higher you build the dam, the more powerful the resistance and more furious the escaping current."

"Then you might as well banish all laws, even against thieves and robbers. According to your doctrine, the more laws against

stealing the more men will steal. The more guards against bank robbery the more banks will be robbed."

"I don't say that! I speak not of thieves or thieving, but only of the Social Evil."

"Well, then, the Social Evil. They have licensed this in some American cities. But license has proved a failure; it only increased the abomination."

"Ah! They didn't give it a fair trial, a fair show."

"Yes, they did. They showed that the evil nearly doubled while sanctioned by law. It took on a bolder face, even assumed the garb of respectability. You say, don't dam the stream. We say, dry it up altogether; stop the fountains!"

"Then why don't you dry up the stream in Boston?"

"Because of just such men as you! You represent, or rather misrepresent, the wealth and culture of Boston. When you, and such as you, strike for temperance, then intemperance will be banished. When the upper classes frown down the sin of incontinence, then social law and morals will be strengthened. Let them set the seal of their disapprobation on fashionable sins; let them practise self-sacrifice, self-denial, mortify the lusts of the flesh, denounce by precept and example Boston's vice, and vice will disappear."

"Ha! ha! ha! Then you expect me to make a martyr of myself for my fellow-men, eh? I tell you, no man has a right to say what I shall eat or what I shall drink?"

"No, so long as your habits do not affect your fellows, so long as your position does not place you above other men. But when you become a leader, claim to be an exemplar, then public opinion, next to the Almighty, has a right to penetrate your very thoughts, the secrets of your bedchamber, hold you to account for every act; what you eat, what you drink, what you wear, and all your incomings and outgoings, all that tells upon the morals of society."

"Ah, ha! you would make me a perfect man, — an anchorite, a plain liver, a teetotaller, a church-goer, and, in fact, a sort of sacrificial offering. Ha, ha! I should be too good for earth!"

"Yes, sir. I would have you temperate for yourself, your family, your son, and for an example to your neighbors. No man liveth unto himself. The higher his social position the greater his accountability to God and men. Those Puritans you sneer at were your fathers, — self-denying, God fearing. They planted seeds for the freest, grandest, most intelligent nation on earth. Yet you, pampered in wealth, despise these men, ridicule their faith, and contemn

the city of your birth ! Still you call yourself American, Republican, ex-official of Boston ! Heaven preserve us ! Is it possible that Americans like you can play toady to foreign rank, power, and fashion ; spend thousands upon thousands wrung from the hearts' blood of poor tenants and poorer mill-hands, spend it abroad in aping defunct counts, dissolute nobles, and dethroned royalty ! Then, worse still, to condemn, to sneer at and deride the city that gave you birth ! ”

“ But, sir, you don't understand me. I do not sneer at Boston. I only condemn her hypocrisy.”

“ Well, be that as it may, if Boston is as bad as you say, I declare I will know it in less than two months. I had started for a voyage round the world ; started for a year's recreation. But I now give up all thoughts of pleasure. Will turn my back on all enjoyments. I will heed only this call of duty. I will go back to Boston, spend all I am worth, if need be, in ferreting out Boston's sins. I will employ men to penetrate and expose every dark nook and corner, lane, and by-way. I will turn Boston-Inside Out like a garment. If your portrayal be true, then I am needed in Boston to help redeem her from shame. If not true, then the world shall know who are her detractors.”

With this I parted from Mr. Augustus Gildersleeve. I had gone abroad for my health ; had visited London and Liverpool.

Finally I decided to go to France, and study the various phases of life in the French capital. Like most travellers, I was astonished at the magnitude of Paris. I looked with wonder on its stupendous public works, its magnificent buildings ; admired its splendid trophies of art, which meet the gaze on every hand. I paid homage to the wonderful spirit and genius of a people who, stricken and impoverished by a wasting war, had yet sprung as one man to the patriotic duty of removing the traces of the conflict, and restoring their beautiful capital to its former glory.

On the ruins of a despotism that had crushed them to the earth, that had ground their very souls as well as their bodies under its iron heel, this same people had erected a stable and consistent government. As a citizen of one great republic, I could not but take pride in viewing the success of this the most recent experiment in popular government. But I witnessed the luxurious prodigality seen on every side, with different feelings. I could not observe the heartless gayety and soulless frivolity which distinguish the social atmosphere of Paris without severe condemnation. My very soul sickened at

the open sin and profligacy ; at the affected observance of religious forms, and the actual irreverence for everything sacred ; the gross and shameless indecency which makes the streets of Paris a horror and an offence to a modest eye ; the false show and glitter which cover no end of social corruption, and the sham sentiment which gives more pity to the condemned criminal on his way to the galleys, than to the suffering and starving outcast who begs for bread in her public thoroughfares.

On my first Sunday in Paris, I awoke with the sounds of *b-u-z-z*, *b-u-z-z*, *b-u-z-z* in my ears. What is it ? Not the chimes of Sabbath bells, but sounds of business and pleasure. The clang, clang, clang of the hammer, whirring of machinery, whistling of engines. Is this Sunday ?

How about the churches ? I visited the most noted ones in Paris, the Madeleine, Notre Dame, St. Vincent de Paul. The crowds were not large. Many of them were strangers gazing upon the walls, more intent on the works of art than devotion ; upon gildings, frescos, grand altars, vases, groups of statuary. In Notre Dame are the sacred relics ; the thorn from the Saviour's crown ; the coronation relics of Napoleon ; the iron crown he placed upon his head in defiance of priest or pope. In the Church of the Invalides may be seen the red marble tomb of Napoleon, the thousand tattered and faded battle-flags hung from the roof ; bas-reliefs, busts and statues of statesmen, saints and generals. These attract the eye, but distract from the worship.

I visited the church of the English Ambassador, Lord Lyons, in Paris. Would the Prince of Wales be there ? No ; his cousin, King George of Hanover, had just died. This gave the Prince an excuse to keep away from church, but not from the horse-race.

From the churches I went to the Exposition. There I found the machinery in full blast in every department except the American and English. The American Corliss engine was moving, but it was under control of a Paris firm. Mr. Corliss said, in Philadelphia :—

"If the Centennial Exhibition opens on Sunday my engine shall be taken out." In Paris he had no such power ; the spindles and looms were in full play ; there was the busy hum of traffic from various nations, — Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, Egypt, Barbary ; yet the American and English quarters were silent. Carriages, tables, goods, utensils, were all covered ; sentinel saying, "No exhibition on Sunday." I was proud of England and of America, proud to see the Sabbath respected. But while England as a nation hon-

ored the Sabbath, her crown Prince was at the horse-race in Paris, and her royal family travelling in Scotland.

I honor the Sabbath Alliance of Scotland, which protested against the Queen's travelling. I honor the boatman that refused to ferry the royal party across Loch Maree. I honor the inn-keeper of Achnasheen, who would not allow his horses to carry the Queen's letters on the Lord's day. But I detest the royalty that breaks the laws; I abhor any privileged class that shall use their privileges to corrupt society, be they king, prince, bishop, priest or peer.

Coming out of the Exposition I saw throngs moving toward *Longchamps*, the race-course of Paris. The *Bois de Boulogne* was filled. The newspapers said there were half a million of people. It was the great race of the year. Its greatest patron was President McMahon, son of the church, with his bigoted wife, a Catholic. Their appearance, however, elicited but little enthusiasm. But when the Shah of Persia came in his royal robes the crowds applauded. Perhaps France was to teach him refined civilization and Christianity by introducing him to a Sunday horse-race!

Within the gates were stands for the pool sellers. Here I saw excited men and women staking money on the races; among whom was ex-Queen Isabella, of Spain, who was said to be one of the heaviest betters present. She was expelled from Spain for licentious practices. Paris was her natural retreat. But to-day she is again dominant at the Spanish court and in the church.

The horse that won the grand prize was raised in England. Both princes and horses are reared in England. But they have to go to Paris for their Sunday racing! This was my first horse-race. I did not enter the grounds, but saw enough through the gates to sicken me of European life, its fashions and its follies.

Returning from the races the way was blocked at the Arch of Triumph where the great streets radiate; and looking down the Champs Elysees, the finest avenue in Paris, I saw thousands of carriages driving six deep, three on each side, extending mile upon mile.

It took half an hour for our omnibus to cross the street. Many carriages were occupied by Americans, — the lions of the day, — merchant-princes, generals, American bonanza men, petroleum men, shoddy men, quack-medicine advertisers, imitating effete nobility in their lavish display.

After the race, instead of religious services as in America on Sunday evening, the Sabbath wound up with theatres, operas, ballet-dancing, open-air concerts, all patronized by government, and extend-

ing till midnight. Such is life in Paris. Americans spend millions abroad year after year to encourage such life as this!

On the Champs Elysees I met Jonathan Jerks.

"Wal, now, sir, I lost you in the crowd, but well met again. By jiminy! You'd jest be astonished at the number of Americans I've run against out here in what they call the *Shamps Ellises*. Queer names they du have for places here in Paris! Boston's turn-in' out pooty numerous at this 'ere Exposition. Every t' other man you meet hails from the 'Hub of the Univarse.' I declare, now, ef here hain't another on 'em! Slippers, by gracious!"

"Slippers" was sauntering towards us, cane under his arm, eyeglass to his eye, and with an air of the most complete contentment and satisfaction. "Hullo!" said Jerks. "How du you du? How du you like Paris?"

"Aw! charmant! charmant! There ith nothing in the whole world like *la belle Paree*! Everything ith tho thuperb, tho magnifique!"

"*MagnifEEK*!" said Jerks, imitating him. "Wal, yes, I should say so! You may like it! But give me America! Yankeedoodledom afore all the world, I say!"

"But America hath no architecture, no thtatuary, no thculpture."

"No, we don't think much of stone men nor stone women. We in America believe in *live* animals, — *live* stock. The dead stock we send abroad," looking significantly at Slippers.

"Slippers" stroked his silky moustache with an air of great disdain.

"Aw, don't speak of America! How can you mention that vulgaw country in the thame bweath with Francaise and Paree!"

"Wal, Paris is some punkins, I allow," said Jerks. "She is a handsome city, an' no mistake."

"Yeth, only look at her chawming thenes, thplendid boulevard, aw, and her gorgeouth palatheth!"

"Palaces! Yes, an' they've got a pecooliar history, most of 'em, so I'm told. Built for kings' favorites, — ahem, — of the feminine persuasion, — a good many of 'em, eh?"

"Ah! people in Paree doot thothtiety never trouble themthelfth about thuch inquirieth."

"Oh, they don't, eh? Wal, now, I didn't know that," said Jerks, whimsically.

"Excuth me, but I am afraid you are not familiar, aw, with doot thothtiety. Doot thothtiety hath to wink at a good many little irreg-ularitieth."

"Wink at 'em, eh? Just so. Swallow 'em whole, I should say, without comment, as the alligator did to the little picaninny. How about the Paris *demi-monde*? You don't wink at them, I take it. And the paintings of them 'ere women in the Louvre. Those are enough to make any decent man wink from very shame!"

"Ha, ha! You don't understand. That is high art."

"Du tell! Wal, for a Boston man, you've got the queerest notions on morals that I ever heard tell on."

"Moralth! ha! ha! I thee, thir, that you've got the ordinary rural idea of Bothton, — aw. You think that Bothton ith thtill the thity of the Puritanth. A mithtaken idea, I athure you. Bothton ith one of the wickedetht platheth in the world. Ha! ha! I could convinth you that Paree ith nothing to Bothton. Aw! I am dithguthted with the verwy name!"

There it was again! The same idea that Mr. Gildersleeve had advanced. As the exquisite left us, I turned to Jerks, and said, reflectively: —

"How singular that a man of sense and a simpleton can agree in their opinions!"

"Heh? What d' ye mean, sir?"

"Why, Mr. Gildersleeve has been trying to convince me that Boston is a perfect Sodom and Gomorrah of wickedness, and now this jackanapes offers to do likewise."

"Haw! haw! haw!" laughed Jerks. "Don't believe a word of it, sir."

"But their words have given my thoughts a new turn. Jonathan, I've determined to cut short my pleasure-trip. I am going home."

"Jerusalem! Wal, the very name of home sets my heart a thumpin'. Air you really in earnest, now?"

"Never more so in my life. I am going home to see if Boston is so vile, so wicked. I will do *my* part to redeem Boston's good name."

"By hokey! I'd jest like ter go with you, sir. I've been ter Boston a few times myself, an' I never saw nothin' so very bad about her. I remember, though, the fust time I came down, some sharpers tried ter pick me up for a flat an' greenhorn. But I had my eye-teeth cut early, you see, so they missed their little game. Come, now, sir, I'd like mightily ter hire out ter you an' take a hand in this ere' job."

"You are just the man I want, Jonathan," I replied.

' All right, sir, I've got ter make a little trip up ter New Hampsheer for a week or so, ter 'tend ter a little matter of business" (Jonathan was thinking of Gaddy Gibbins and the present he had for her), "then I'm ready ter go in with you, squire, heart and hand, in the work of turnin' the crank on to Boston."

And Jonathan worked his elbow as if he was turning an enormous crank which would grind Boston's sins and evil-doers into particles.

The next day we embarked for America.

CHAPTER III.

LECTURE IN BOSTON MUSIC HALL—DARK REVELATIONS OF CRIME.

When my troubles were thickest, being sued for \$10,000, the papers refusing to report my lectures, and Music Hall having been closed against me, I gave a lecture, most of which is the following:—

Once more on golden hinges turning, Boston Music Hall is open! Open to Henry Morgan! (Applause.) Once more my lips are free to denounce Boston's sins. Once more my voice is heard. Ay, and heard while my prosecutors are in jail! (Tremendous applause.)

I came home from Europe abhorring Parisian life and Paris sins. But alas! I have found a second edition of Paris in Boston. I have opened in Boston the modern box of Pandora. A thousand evils have sprung out! I dug too deep! Opening sewers is not healthful. (Laughter.) You have to drop the lid down quickly, or somebody will get sick. I got sick myself; the evils struck in; not only sick, but terribly mortified at the state of things. I have had a glimpse of Tophet on earth. I hold in my hand documents that would set all Boston in consternation; start a skeleton in a hundred households. But with my consent they shall never see the light. I hold them merely as a warning for the ungodly to sin no more.

I have probed Boston's iniquities to its depths: its dance halls, its dances of death, clairvoyants, mesmerists, pre-natal murderers, crimes of self-destruction, and "Busy Bees," where "Led Astray" is acted to the life at \$3 admission.

The time was when crimes were not winked at in Boston as they are to-day. When Major Jones and Captain Boynton were at the head of the State police, they meant business. Then gambling was checked. Then the crow-bar and axe were used to force the doors; the tiger's den was invaded; their trophies were many. From four to six bushels of ivory chips were seized, tables, banks, and all the paraphernalia confiscated and destroyed. Unlawful gaming was so much interfered with that \$40,000 were offered to Capt. Boynton if he would desist from prosecuting the gamblers.

Now the head of the reform police has chosen the biggest gambler in Boston to be his associate, to run his horses and manage his trotting-park. How such a reformer would look in arresting giant gamblers! A little puppy dog attacking a lion! Before the Legislature I asked that man to resign! He did resign; but how are we bettered? We have a corrupt police commission responsible to nobody. Neither to City Hall nor the State House.

Yet there are some fruits of my efforts. Victims have been rescued, and gamblers compelled to disgorge. I give instances.

A man high in spiritual circles said he had become intoxicated and lost all he had at a noted gambling-house, one of those which I had exposed.

He asked, "What can I do?"

I said, "Demand your money back or sue them." I gave him the names of all the gamblers of that house; he showed them his facts, threatened suit, and got part of his money back without cost and without being exposed.

One man told me he had been enticed by wines and free dinners to risk small sums until at last he lost all his father gave him to set him up in business, some \$10,000. I encouraged him to issue suit, and considerable of the property was recovered, without the cost of trial.

A father said to me, "My son has gambled away his all, unknown to me; I had not the first suspicion that he was ever in a gambling-den in his life. When I found that he had not only spent his money, but had also pawned his wife's jewelry, worth \$600, and gambled that away, then, sir, I became so enraged that I seized him by the throat, hurled him to the ground, and threatened to choke him to death if he did not reveal every gambling-place, and every gambler, where he had staked and lost. It was a severe remedy. In fact, I was crazed, actually beside myself, and often have repented of it since, but it cured the boy. He led me to every man, and

every place, and made the most of them refund. And, oh, sir! if I do say it, a better son than he is to-day does not live!" tears streaming down his face as he spoke, and his voice tremulous with emotion. That man got the names of gamblers from my list and sued the most obstinate of them, and recovered the money.

Some were not so lucky. A young woman of culture and refinement, marrying the son of a clergyman, and seeing her husband ruined, sat for hours on the stairs of a den on Elm Street, to prevent him from entering. She was driven to desperation, and resorted to this public demonstration as her only hope. She at last prevailed, won him back to his home and to his child, but his fortune was not recovered. She came to me, wrote down a list of all the leading gamblers, including her husband, and asked me to invoke the law. The husband became alarmed, begged me not to have his name appear, and promised to reform.

A soldier's wife from Maine found herself in the street without a crust, a few days after coming to Boston. The husband had drawn his pension money, and spent every cent of it in gambling. I gave her a few dollars, then appealed to the police, but could get no redress.

A young man belonging to the most popular church of the city told me his woes. He had borrowed goods, and pawned them to gamble with; when the time came to redeem them he had no money. I gave him money for temporary relief, but his doom was not far distant, and he found no mercy.

A clerk in the Tremont House had gambled in Montgomery Place and lost \$1,000. Part of this he had taken from the till. He must restore it or be ruined. He asked the rich gambler to lend him \$100, just \$100 only; he would pay interest and principal, and never make complaint. But the Faro King, with sleek face and sardonic grin, coolly bowed him out of the house. The Tremont House and Revere House were under the same partnership.

The clerk was ordered to carry \$300 to the Revere House. On his way he passed David Blanchard's faro bank. He thought, "Now if I could only win \$100, I could cover my tracks till my salary comes due, and save my reputation and my place." He looked at the money, hesitated, parleyed with his conscience, and at last went in. He lost \$10, \$20, and at last \$100. He could not now appear at the Revere House with part of the \$300; he must win the \$100 back or lose all; so he ventured, and lost the whole \$300.

He went back to the Tremont House, fell upon his knees, said,

"Bear with me; forgive me this time. I will pay you every cent. I will live on a single meal; work my fingers to the bone; be faithful and true to you; receive not a cent till all is paid." But while pleading, he saw the officer coming, and knew his doom was at hand.

He asked permission to step into the next room, just for a moment only, to change his coat; there seizing a pistol, he shot himself dead.

Another case: A young man said to his wife, "Mary, I am not fit to live; I wish to die."

"Don't feel so sad," said the devoted wife. You would not leave me and the children; you must live but for their sake."

"No, no! I am not fit to live. I am but a disgrace to you and to them."

"Don't talk so," she said, in soothing tones. "What have you done?"

"I have spent the \$18,000 my mother left me a few months ago, in gambling."

"But you have your hands and your health; you can earn more; don't take on so." And she strove to cheer him up by kind caresses, with more than a wife's affection and endearment.

At last he broke out, "Oh, Mary! it will break your heart if I tell you all! This house is gone; the furniture is gone! All you have on earth, all your mother's gifts, are mortgaged to the pawnbroker! I brought him in when you was away, and sold them all!"

Then, for the first time, that wife yielded to paroxysms of grief.

"What!" she exclaimed. "The dearest mementos of my mother! Every couch, chair, and table! Even the children's toys! All gone to the faro bank!" And she cried and sobbed aloud!

The husband, seeing her anguish, became so mortified and chagrined that he seized a pistol and shot himself dead on the spot.

All these instances occurred within a few months of each other, and scores of others equally heartrending, might be related. Yet I am condemned for revealing them to the public, and for sounding alarm! Oh, Boston! Boston! Has it come to this? Oh, shame! shame! where is thy blush!

Now for the policy shops. These are in full blast under the shadow of the police station, and some policemen are among their chief patrons. There is a policy shop in District IV., and a patrolman is said to have staked his money and won largely. My agent visited the shop on Washington Street; it is in a back room, up one flight, approached through a dark alley. No lock or bolt debars the

entrance. The business is conducted as openly as if sanctioned by city authority. In a corner was a table, and behind it the agent gathered in the spoils. There were fifteen persons present, the majority of them poor; many black, and all talking of the three chances out of seventy-eight. Hush! a messenger arrives with a despatch from Exchange Avenue. All eyes are strained. Alas! no luck for any in that crowd. Crestfallen they retire. This was twelve o'clock, and there was another drawing at five. One is behind a barber's shop. The sign reads "Shaving done here," and I bet it is. One is on Leverett Street, and there are two more on Cambridge Street, one of them run by a colored man of military experience. There were present at the last-mentioned place nineteen colored men, two women, and one white man. The negroes' propensity for gambling finds full play in Boston, three-fourths of the above parties being colored. Some of them were war-scarred; many had fought bravely for the bird of freedom, but they all fall like cowards before the claws of the tiger.

The King of Policy has twenty three agencies in Boston, with two or three clerks at each, called "writers." They are paid fifteen or twenty per cent. I have dared the police again and again to arrest that man. He might reveal too much for their comfort. He boasts that he has the heads of the police at his back, and never has been molested. But let another man set up the business, he is hurried off to jail forthwith, no competition being allowed. He is in receipt of \$200 and \$300 a day, and policemen are his best friends.

A tenant of mine lost \$1,000 or more at his shops, borrowing wherever he could get a dollar, and pawning, at last, his wife's furniture. In his distress he went to the Policy King, plead and wept, but got nothing back.

He then placed his case in the hands of a detective, demanding \$500. No one knows how much the king gave the detective to let him off easy. It was settled for \$100, the detective taking \$20 out of the \$100, besides having a salary from the State. Glorious are the fruits of a detective! He bleeds both parties, having his bread buttered on three sides.

Of the 7,600 deaths in Boston last year, 3,000 were caused by dissipation and vice. Think of it! 3,000 prematurely dead; 2,000 by licentiousness alone! Think of it! 2,000 victims in one year reeling to the grave! 2,000 marked and branded for the sacrifice! 2,000 of the young, the fair, the beautiful; once the fond hope of loving parents, ornaments of home, pride of the family circle. What an

army of sin! Merciful heaven! Can it be that so many die in Boston for want of warning, die without hope, when one-half of the destruction might be prevented by strict enforcement of the law? Can Boston stand this drain? Can she afford this constant loss of vitality? Can Boston's salaried officials waste her resources? Can they drink and game and trifle when so much is at stake? Have they no better example to set? No respect for human life? No fear of God? Will they spend Boston's nine millions of taxes only to encourage dissipation and crime? Forbid it, heaven!

Neither pulpit, press, nor police is awake to its duty. Neither sounds the note of alarm. The press is content to give the news; the voice of the pulpit is weak, and does not reach one quarter of the people. Who, then, shall warn young men? Every watchman should be a minister of warning, and cry, "Thus saith the law!" Now, how is law enforced in Boston? I hold in my hand the Police Commissioners' Report for last year. It is a fraud,—a blind! The report says: "There are one hundred and one places where it is suspected that liquor is sold in a small way without a license." What! only one hundred and one? Why there are over 1,000 unlicensed drinking places in Boston! There are more than one hundred in Ward XVI. alone, forty within a few rods of each other; seventeen in one street; to say nothing of the houses of ill-fame. How about gambling-houses? How many of these places are only suspected? On that head the report is silent. Yet there are a hundred gambling-places in Boston running night and day. The gambling mania has become an epidemic. For fifty years the laws against lotteries have been enforced; not a Boston paper dared publish their advertisements. To-day lotteries are openly advertised, and thousands of dollars monthly go through the Boston post-office to Kentucky and New Orleans.

Now for the hidden crimes that are hourly brought to light. Unburied victims are swept up by nearly every tide, rising from the river like accusing ghosts, demanding vengeance on the heads of their destroyers. Boston's Sabbath bells never toll without striking the knell of some unburied, murdered victim. Who are these unclaimed dead? Ask the mournful waves of the harbor! Ask the dark waters of the Back Bay! Ask the woods and the fields! Ask the houses of mystery, whose doors open only to the magic touch of gold! Ask the hundred so-called doctors, male and female, borrowing honored titles to cover deeds of darkness and blood!

Look at that unknown victim floating in the Back Bay! Look

at that ghastly, mutilated corpse thrown from Lynn bridge, which has been the horror and mystery of two cities. See the weeping and wailing of relatives and friends! Hear the indignant murmurs of an outraged community. See that wife, discovered by her heart-broken husband in a Court Street den. She clings to him, and cries, "Oh! forgive me! Pardon me, my husband! I have done wrong!" and dies in his arms, the victim of malpractice. See that young girl in the hands of a notorious quack on Harrison Avenue. Child of wealth and affluence, TEMPTED, BETRAYED AND DESERTED, she flies in desperation to an unhallowed sanctuary, yields to the empiric's deadly art. In dying agony, she prays that her mother may be called. Oh, mother! mother! I'm lost! I'm lost!" She pours into that fond mother's bosom the story of her sin and shame. So swells the record of Boston's hidden crimes.

Hundreds of such tragedies of yearly occurrence that never reach the ear of the police or meet the eye in public print. Who of all these two-fold murderers have ever been tried in Boston, save two, —Madam Goodrich, the murderer of Jennie Clark, and the Dearborn woman on Court Street? She could not get bail, so she was sentenced seven years to prison. Those getting bail — they can escape. Oh! ye pre-natal murderers! Thank your stars that ye have money and friends! Ye still live! walk the streets with an unblushing front; still preach and practise free love; while your victims die in shame, without even a Christian burial. Yet the police report but one case in 1877, and only nine cases in 1878, when 900 cases would be nearer the mark. So much for crime in Boston. So will it ever be while district attorneys have plenary power to quash and annul at will.

The police are not wholly to blame for the non-execution of the law. They arrest, but the district attorney discharges. One policeman states he has arrested over forty persons. Not one out of ten came to trial.

In Suffolk County, in one year, there were 1,667 liquor cases. Out of these only fourteen persons were convicted; five hundred and two were *nolle pros'd*, and 1,136 laid on file, never to be called up again!

What use for police to arrest when nobody is convicted? What use for philanthropists to labor, spend time and money, when one man, by the stroke of his pen, can over-ride judge, jury, law and justice?

Why not dispense with judge and jury? Why pay hundreds of

dollars a day for mockeries? Let the attorney or the attorney's clerk do the work. Call him king, emperor, dictator, or what you please. No need of constitutions, legislatures, or laws. He is a law unto himself. Let all men bow. The crier would then open the court in this way: "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All persons having any business before this honorable court will now draw near and give attention. It is hereby declared that all cases coming before this court shall be settled by the attorney's clerk, *nolens volens*. He shall have power to *nolle pros.*, lay on file, pigeon-hole, kill, or bury; and that judge, jury, lawyers, witnesses, and constables be dismissed as useless appendages. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum!* God save the Commonwealth!"

No wonder crime is rampant, rogues are bold, law defied; no wonder grim murder stalks through the land. Three murderers hanged in New England in one day!

CAN BOSTON BE REDEEMED? I had a dream which was not all a dream. I saw Boston petrified like the valley of dry bones which Ezekiel saw petrified by sin! Hush! Hark! The enchanter's wand has waved over the city. Touched the inhabitants. They are held in magic spell. In their icy coldness let me photograph and weigh them. All stand in the place, attitude and posture in which the spell smote them. All are hushed, breathless, death-like, silent. There the debauchee, with cup at his lips. There the gambler at his cards. There the burglar, with keys and lantern in hand. There the midnight assassin, with knife upraised.

Now judgment falls. They are weighed, and the scene changes! Here is the actor at the crowded theatre. The audience, with hands extended to applaud! Here the judge on the bench; culprit at the bar; jury in the box. Here the preacher in the pulpit and his flock in the pews,—all cold, motionless, frozen as marble. Morally, this is Boston. There is no breath, no life in her. Again the scene changes! Ezekiel saw bone come to bone, and flesh and beauty cover them. There stands the maiden at her toilet; the student at his books; the professor before his class. Yet there is "no breath in them." This, too, in Boston.

Oh! Boston! Boston! Thou art weighed and found wanting. There is "no breath in thee." Eyes that see not! Ears that hear not! Hearts that beat not! "Prophecy!" Can these bones live? Hark! From the court, the prisons, and the tombs comes the wail, "No breath in them!" Hark! The waves of ocean rolling up from Plymouth Rock, crying, "No breath in them!" Hark! From

Copp's Hill, the graves of the Puritan fathers, the Wilsons, the Cottons, the Mathers. They cry, "Has it come to this? No breath in them! Where is the inheritance we left our children?" Hark! From Old South, Old North, and the classic halls of old Harvard! "No breath in them!" Angels whisper, and the winds of heaven answer, "NO BREATH IN THEM!" Oh! ye watchmen on the towers of Zion! Ye prophets of the Lord! Prophecy! Can these bones live? "Yes! the Lord hath spoken. His promises are sure, and amen!" In the name of God, cry to the four winds. Oh, Breathe! breathe upon these slain! Spirit Omnipotent! breathe upon these dry bones! Breathe upon the press, the bar, the church! Breathe upon Liberalism! Breathe upon the cold formalities of Orthodoxy! Breathe upon Boston! Once more may Boston rise and shine among the high places of the earth! Let the electric spark from heaven touch her heart and bring her to life. Then shall her multitudes keep holy day! Churches be filled! Her Sabbath bells peal with anthems of praise! Her liquor saloons be closed, gambling dens abolished, sin be abated, and Boston redeemed. And Boston from her triune hills and classic halls, shall sing, "Hallelujah! hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

CHAPTER IV.

GILDERSLEEVE MANSION. — SERVANTS IN A FROLIC.

"I declar'! Dat ain't good manners! No, it 't aint!" exclaimed the colored servant, Sambo, to Mrs. Dawkins's guests in the kitchen of the Gildersleeve mansion on Beacon Hill. "Jus' what de old broverb say,—

'When de old cat be away,
Den de mice dey play.'"

"Why, what's the matter, Sambo?" said Gaddy Glibbens, who had now been installed for a week as Mrs. Dawkins's chief assistant. "We ain't a-doin' any harm. We're only tellin' fortunes."

"Tellin' fortunes! Should t'ink you war! Call *dat* tellin' fortunes—knockin' ober t'ings, an' makin' such a rumpus as dis yere!"

"Don't you be alarmed, Sambo," said Mrs. Dawkins, laughing. "I have charge here during my master's absence, and I'll see that no damage is done."

"All right, Miss Dawkins," said Sambo.

"Your master must be pooty well off, Sambo," said Jonathan, to turn the subject. "I calkilate now this 'ere house an' fixin's must ha' cost a a right down harndsome sum of money."

"Mars' Gildersleebe 's one ob de riches' men in Boston," said Sambo, proudly. "Guess he kin afford ter hab de stylish city house ter say nuffin' ob de ole homestead in de country—an' what you call *de fixin's* besides. Don't beleeebe *you* eber saw such *fixin's* way up dar in Noo Hum'shire—dat I don'. You jes' come up stairs wid me, an' I'll show you somefin' dat will make yer open yer eyes."

This was exactly what Jonathan was after. Accordingly the whole party followed Sambo to the upper parts of the house. Pausing in the spacious hall, Sambo directed the Yankee's attention to the various objects which adorned it, and then unlocking a door to the right, he conducted them into the parlor.

"What you t'ink ob dis?" he said, after lighting the jets of a large bronze chandelier.

It was certainly the most astonishing sight Jonathan Jerks ever beheld, notwithstanding his European experience. He was fairly dazzled with the splendor of rich furniture, costly works of art, crimson and lace curtains, full-length mirrors, and a thousand and one specimens of *bric-a-brac* on every hand. But though amazed, the Yankee outwardly maintained a cool, indifferent air.

"Think of it? Oh! It's pretty fair for a museum," he said. "But I should think the folks would be afraid to walk round here, for fear of knockin' over somethin' an' smashin' things generally."

Sambo's eyes opened to their widest extent. Such language as this was almost profanation, was little short of sacrilege to his mind.

"Wha'—wha' yer say?" he almost gasped. "Call dese yer magnifumcent parlors a musheum? Wal, I declar' ef I t'ought you was such a ignoramus, Mars' Jerks."

"What's that thing hangin' up there?" Jonathan asked, pointing to an escutcheon over one of the marble mantel-pieces

"*Thing!*" repeated the indignant Sambo. "Dat is de coat-ob-arms ob Missus Gildersleebe's family, I would jus' hab you understan', Mars' Jerks. Missus is de descendent ob one ob de great 'ristocratic families. Her ginyology goes way back troo' de Wint'rops an' de Trumbles, an' de Addumses,—an' de good Lor' on'y knows what else."

"Shouldn't wonder ef it went back ter the old Adam himself—him that kicked up such a muss in the Garden of Eden," said Jonathan, with a twinkle in his eye.

Sambo disdained to answer this remark, and next conducted the party across the parlors to the conservatory.

"Talk about de Garden ob Eden," said Sambo, throwing open the door with an air of triumph. "Wha' you's say ter *dis*? Here am de fines' private conservumtory in de lan', I tell *you*! Trees and flowers way from Egupt, Yurrupe, and Souf' 'Merika! Guess you's nebber see anytin' like dis yer b'fore!"

"I should call it all a big waste o' money," said the practical Yankee. "I'd a sight ruther hev my garding a-growin' outdoors. The smell of all them flowers in a room's enough to make a feller sick. Phew! le's git out of here. It puts me in mind of a funeral!"

Room after room was visited, each presenting a scene of the most lavish adornment. At last they came to a handsomely-furnished chamber.

"This was poor Master Fred's room," said Mrs. Dawkins, with a sigh. "They perfectly doated on him — their eldest born"

"Dead, eh?" said Jerks.

"Jus' two year ago," Sambo answered, shaking his woolly head. "Dey felt mighty bad about it, Mars' Jerks, I ken tell yer."

"And the room has never been used since the funeral," added the housekeeper. "Mrs. Gildersleeve said to me, — 'Hannah, you will see that Mr. Fred's room is kept locked up; open it only when necessary to dust and air it.'"

"Gosh! You don't say!" exclaimed Jonathan. "Did the young feller hev the small-pox or any of those 'ere ketchin' diseases?"

"Nuffin ob de kind," said Sambo. "He just done an' tumbled out ob dis yer winder."

"Tumbled out the winder!" repeated Jerks, while Gaddy gave a little cry of horror.

"Oh, *do* tell us all about it, Mrs. Dawkins."

"Well, I don't mind telling, only you must promise never to lisp a word, for it's a *family secret*, you see. Draw up them chairs and set down here then."

"How mysterious you be, Aunt Dawkins," said Gaddy, all in a flutter. "Dear me! I do hope it's nothin' about ghosts yew're goin' ter tell us."

"Don't talk about ghosts! How ridiculous you are, Gaddy Glibbens," retorted the housekeeper.

Sambo shook his head gravely, but drew nearer to the group who had now seated themselves close together. The lamp which

the negro held in his hand cast a fitful light around the apartment, on the walls, the closed shutters, on the disused bedstead in one dark corner. A chill somehow seemed to run through the veins of all, produced by Gaddy's uncanny remark.

"Wha' for you talk 'bout de spooks, Miss Giddy," said Sambo. "You shouldn't orter say nuffin 'bout such t'ings in *dis* yer house."

"Poh! Ghosts are all fiddlesticks!" said the matter-of-fact Yankee. "Dead folks never come ter life nowadays."

"Dunno 'bout dat," persisted Sambo, with a mysterious air. "Guess ef Missus Dawkins an' we war a mind ter, we could tell yer 'bout de strange sounds an' de noises we's heard yer in de dead o' night since de folks been away."

"All your imagination, or the wind rattlin' the blinds," returned Jonathan. "But go on with your story, Miss Dawkins. The 'spooks,' as you call 'em, Sambo, won't show themselves while I'm 'round, you can bet!"

Thus adjured, the housekeeper proceeded to unfold her tale, which was as follows:—

Fred Gildersleeve was the eldest son. He was dissipated, and by degrees became a confirmed drunkard. One night Mr. and Mrs. Gildersleeve with Gertrude had gone to a party, leaving Mrs. Dawkins and Sambo to await their arrival home. Midnight sounded and they had not come. Suddenly Mrs. Dawkins heard some one fumbling at the front door. She called Sambo. They went to the door, opened it, and Fred Gildersleeve, dreadfully intoxicated, fell across the threshold. Sambo quickly helped him to his feet, and then assisted him to his chamber. Soon after the family returned.

"Has Mr. Fred come home?" Mrs. Gildersleeve inquired. The housekeeper told her that he had, and had gone to his room.

"It was really too bad," said Gertrude, "that brother Fred didn't go with us. He promised me he would go, and stay away from that horrid club for one night."

"Your brother is fonder of his club than of ladies' society, Gertrude," said Mrs. Gildersleeve. "I am glad indeed that he did not go. Mrs. Dawkins, did my son come home sober?"

The housekeeper sadly shook her head.

"Mr. Gildersleeve," said his wife, sternly, "this thing must be stopped. It is time for you to exert your parental authority. Are we to be disgraced by this shameless son?"

Before Mr. Gildersleeve could answer, before the words were hardly out of his wife's mouth, they were startled by a sudden noise.

A window was heard to open, and then a heavy body fell with a dreadful thud upon the ground without, while the midnight air was filled for an instant with a horrible, unearthly shriek; and then all was hushed.

"It is Fred! My God! He has fallen from the window!" cried Mr. Gildersleeve; and followed by Sambo and the others, he rushed out into the garden.

A terrible sight met their horrified gaze.

Lying in a heap under the window, his face covered with blood, his form quivering, was the unfortunate young man. He was unconscious.

"Quick! Run for Dr. Lancet, Sambo," cried Mr. Gildersleeve.

The physician soon arrived, and the still unconscious youth was borne to his chamber.

"I can give you no hope," said the doctor to Mr. and Mrs. Gildersleeve. "He can survive but a few days."

Gertrude and the housekeeper were the dying man's constant attendants. He clung to his sister, who tenderly loved him. When he regained consciousness, his first words were for Gertrude.

"Oh, Gerty, do not leave me," he said, faintly. "I fear that I shall die. Oh! I cannot, cannot die! Oh! Send for the doctor! Why does he leave me for a moment? Tell my mother to come to my side. Oh! mother! mother! Why did you put the wine before me? Why did you have it on the table? You taught me first to drink. You said it was fashionable. Told me that wine never hurt anybody? Yet it has brought me to this! Where is the minister? Where is Mr. St. Claire? Why does he not come to give me consolation? Why is he not here to pour balm upon my troubled spirit?"

"Mr. St. Claire is here, brother," said the weeping Gertrude, making way for the clergyman to approach.

"I am sorry to see you thus, Fred," said Mr. St. Claire.

"Sorry!" exclaimed the dying youth. "Well may you be sorry! Look there!" he added, with sudden energy, pointing to a decanter of wine on the table. "How many times have you drank that vile poison with me! How many times have you laughed and joked over the wine in my presence! Oh! Do you know that rum has killed me? I came home drunk, and fell from yonder window! Drunk because of your example, my father's, even my mother's example. Oh! Why did you not warn me? It was your duty as a minister of the Gospel to warn me. If you had only warned me, showed me my weakness, told me of my danger, oh, sir, I might have been a redeemed man, an honor to myself and to my family."

The words died away almost to a whisper. Before they could spring to his aid an awful pallor settled upon his face. His eyes closed. He fell back dead!

Such was Mrs. Dawkins's story.

"Oh, wasn't it dreadful!" said Gaddy, her eyes suffused with tears.

"Guess you'd t'ought so ef you'd been yer, Miss Giddy," said Sambo. "It was de mournfullest time I eber seed. Poor Miss Gertrud took on de wust ob all. It did seem as ef nuffin' would comfort her. I b'lieb ef it hadn't been for Fr. Titus, she'd a gone ravin' distracted. He seemed to be de on'y one dat could do Missy any good. It war an awfu' blow ter de proud mudder, ter t'ink dat her on'y darter, dat she a'most wurships, wouldn't lissen ter noboddy but de Cat'olic priest."

"Wal," said Jerks, "I should 'a' thought Mr. Fred's death would 'a' been a warnin' ter his father an' mother. I should't thought they'd ever dared ter hev' another drop of the durned p'ison in the house."

"Jus' wha' Mars Gildersleeve said hisself," said Sambo. "But den yer see, Missus wouldn't see it in dat light. She nebber would 'low dat it was de liquor dat killed Mars' Fred. It was an accydunt, — she called it, dat might 'a' happened ef he'd nebber seed a glass of wine or brandy. So you see de Missus swung ole Mars' round ter way ob t'inking, cos it am fash'nable ter pass round de champagne an' de claret and de Madeery an' de French brandy in de tip-top s'ciety."

"Wal," said Jerks, as they all proceeded down-stairs, "'tiptop' society may count'nance such customs, but ef it do, there'll be a reck'nin for it, sure as the Bible. You jist mark my word an' see ef a judgment don't follow to parents that won't take notice of such a *plain warnin'* as you've been tellin' about, Mrs. Dawkins."

CHAPTER V.

VISIT TO MR. GILDERSLEEVE'S OFFICE. — MY AGENTS AT WORK.

In probing Boston I learned that many leading citizens let buildings for disreputable purposes. I resolved to enlist the co-operation of the wealthy. I drew up a paper for property-owners to

sign. It read as follows: "We, the undersigned, owners and controllers of real estate in Boston, do pledge ourselves not to let our buildings for disreputable purposes."

To this pledge I secured signatures representing two and a half millions. I met with hearty encouragement from many of Boston's richest men. But I also encountered opposition from quarters least expected. From members of the State and city government, even from church officials. They derided the idea, — refused to indorse the document. I made some discoveries that explained this opposition. One church dignitary was particularly severe in his remarks. He owned, I found, whole blocks of houses let for purposes of shame. Nearly every inmate was engaged in a discreditable calling. No wonder *he* would not sign.

One was a minister. I found even he let his houses for infamous purposes. Pocketed the double toll of vice and sin. Another man — a candidate at one time for governor of the State — also refused his signature. He raved and stormed at the very sight of the paper. "What!" he cried. "Put my name to that? Never! It was an unwarrantable interference," he said. "An infringement on private rights."

Why did this man oppose the measure? Because he had a large income from property leased to liquor-sellers and even for viler purposes. I found one association leased one hundred liquor shops, to say nothing of houses of worse repute. One estate lets twenty houses, mostly for infamous purposes. Another estate leases forty immoral houses.

Even within a stone's throw of my own dwelling are a score of such places. One has existed for years right under the eaves of my church. I have complained time and again to the police authorities, but nothing is done to break it up. Two doors from my chapel a woman was arrested for keeping a human slaughter-house, an illicit lying-in hospital. Next door to that a quack was arrested for the murder of both mother and child. The blood of infants reek to heaven! The very stones of the street cry out!

Many of these dens and houses of shame are to-day, covertly or openly, owned by Boston's so-called "respectable citizens." Some of them men brimful of piety — but precious little morality. Men who say grace at every meal; tell sweet stories at the Sunday-school.

I met some of these men in Europe. They spent their ill-gotten riches with lavish hand and ostentatious display. They made the

name of American a laughing-stock and by-word, and brought reproach upon their native land.

I called upon Mr. Gildersleeve, who had returned from abroad, to secure his signature. His elegant office was situated in a magnificent building, the facade entirely of marble, with bronze and marble groups in *alto rilievo*. Five flights of marble steps ascend between two five rows of fluted columns in variegated colors. An elevator is also at the disposal of those wearied or in haste.

"Glad to see you," said Mr. Gildersleeve, with great cordiality. "What can I do for you, sir?"

"I came, Mr. Gildersleeve, to ask you to sign this paper. As a large owner of real estate, I think you can have no objection."

I handed it to him. He took it and smiled pleasantly, as if happy to oblige me. But as he perused it, his manner changed. He became cold and frigid. I had touched his tenderest part,—his pocket.

"No, sir, I decline," he said stiffly, handing back the paper.

"But, Mr. Gildersleeve! think of your property interest! Why, sir, there are a thousand buildings in Boston, assessed at ten millions, that are used for disreputable purposes. Surely you will help this state of things."

"No, sir, that is the owner's business."

"But sir, property owners owe a duty to the community. They should set an example—discourage vice. Too many of them are willing to accept the spoils of crime and shame. I trust, Mr. Gildersleeve, you are not among the number."

"Well, sir, I must refuse to sign. I have my own reasons for not wishing to place my name to your paper; but I do not care to discuss them now. You cannot change my mind."

Mr. Gildersleeve was an obstinate man. I had attacked his private interests. He seemed to feel that I had invaded his "property rights." I therefore took my leave of him. Coming out of Mr. Gildersleeve's office, I met Jonathan Jerks, who had become one of my most active and efficient agents.

"Wal, I swow! how du you du," he said. "Jes' going to report to you. Got a whole heap of facts for ye."

"Ah! Jerks, what are they?"

"Wal, I've been looking up the doings of Boston pretty well. Gosh, now, jes' hear fact number one: There's more'n two million dollars spent in this here city for theatricals, fun and nonsense, and only jes' about a million and a half for public education. I swan, ain't that a fine showing for the city of culture, eh?"

Jonathan twitched his eyes, twisted his head and jerked himself comically about.

"Yes, sir," he continued. "But jes' wait till I give ye fact number two, — it's a buster: There is fifteen millions of dollars invested in the liquor trade. Yes, sir, that's a solid fact. And, by hokey, ef that fifteen million don't boss politics, the courts, and about the whole of Boston, then I'll eat my head, I will. Why, they darsent go ag'in it. Democrats and Republicans are afraid of it, and have to knuckle down mighty close, I tell ye."

"Ah! you are about right," I returned.

"Right! you bet I am. But jes' wait a minute. I hain't begun to give you my facts. Now here's fact number three: There's more'n two thousand licensed liquor dens in this here city. Jes' think of it — more'n two thousand! Why, every bad house — and there are a thousand of them in Boston — sells liquor, and mighty poor stuff, too, as fur as I can hear. Then there's any quantity of shops hain't no license. Gosh! they say there's a liquor law, but I kinder doubt it. Don't see what good it does, anyway."

Jonathan capered about, flushed and excited.

"Great gosh hemlock! If I hain't forgot fact number four — biggest of the whole lot, too. Wait a second," and he dived into his coat pocket and brought up a greasy slip of paper. "Great Jehosophat Pease!" cried Jerks, handing me the paper, "jes' cast yer eye over this here and see!"

I took the slip and glanced at it. But his erratic hieroglyphics were too illegible to make out.

"What is it?" I asked.

"What is it?" exclaimed Jerks, excitedly, swinging his arms, as if he had got his elbow-crank right on the evil. "Why, sir, this here is a list of nine ministers — ministers of the gospel, mind ye — who belong to a Boston drinking club. Big, high-tone fellows, too. None of yer little shrimps. I swanny! What in thunder is Boston a comin' to if her ministers are a going to uphold drinking? Nice example they set for their congregation to follow, now, don't they, eh?"

"It's a disgrace to the cloth," I rejoined.

"Jes' what I say," said Jonathan, warmly. "It brings shame on to the whole clergy, to have a lot of the high-tone fellows countenance liquor in this way, I swow if it don't. But I've larn't a thing or two, I can tell ye. And one thing is that the liquor interest's got sunthing to say about church as well as state. Yes, sirree,

that's so. They stick their finger in every pie, by hokey if they don't. I can tell you churches where the big rum-seller is cock of the walk. Yes, sir, where priest or parson flatters him up mighty high jes' to get the money wrung from poor drunken wretches and from the heart's blood of thousands sent to ruin by the liquor fiend. I swow, it's too all fired, tarnation mean, it is."

And Jonathan went off like a fire-cracker, into a perfect whirlwind of jerks, and brought his fist down upon the palm of his hand with an emphatic slap of virtuous indignation.

"But that ain't all, not by a long chalk," he continued. "Jes' wait till I stun you with number five. I've been a-looking up this here gambling biz in Boston, and what do I find? Why, that there's about thirty policy shops in full blast, run night and day. And they ain't secret, either, mind ye. Run jes' as open as daylight. The police, they know em' all. You bet they do. But they don't touch 'em. Lose their head if they did. And then there's about fifty faro banks and prop-rooms in Boston. Police know them, likewise. Don't disturb them, either. Why, one of the big gamblers says he is hand and glove with the officers. They might swoop down on the poor heathen Chinese and the negroes once in a while, jes' to let the public think they're smart, but they don't dare to touch the big whales. No, sir, not much."

"These gambling dens should be broken up," said I. "Let public opinion be aroused and the authorities would be compelled to act."

"That's so. You've hit the nail whack on the head this time," said Jonathan, emphatically nodding his head and rolling his eyes. "That's the only way. Yes, sir, and you're the man to do it, Mr. Morgan. I'll help all I can, 'cause it's an eternal shame to let these 'ere gambling dens go right on under the nose of the police and nothing done to stop 'em. Why, sir, some of the big bugs—high officials, politicians and wealthy merchants—go into these places and lose their money. Yes, sir, that's so. There's a friend of mine, now. Come down from Maine. Dad give him \$1,200 to pay the mortgage on the farm. Wal, what did the fool do? Why, a smiling stranger met him on the boat, and he fell into his clutches as easy as rolling off a log. Got him into one of these 'ere dens, and fleeced him out of every red cent."

Jonathan almost cried at the remembrance of his friend's misfortune.

"Yes, sir, and then there was a minister I know'd of. Got

pulled into one of these places. Thought he'd only look on. But like a pesky fool, he kinder got fascinated and risked his money. Lost of course. They always do in the end. Wal, *he* lost \$1,800, every cent the poor fellow had. Why, it made him almost crazy. Had to beg like a dog for enough money to get home with. Any quantity of cases jes' like it, too. Yes, sir, these 'ere dens should be shut up in double-quick time. But I tell ye it'll take a big moral earthquake to do it, though. The big whales are in with the police mighty strong. Yes, sir, their affection for each other is something all-fired touching. Never seed nothing like it in my time."

Jonathan searched his many pockets, and at last brought out another slip of paper.

"There, by hokey!" said he, impressively. "Jes' wait till I give yer number six. It'll paralyze ye. There, look at that."

I took the paper. It contained a long list of names.

"What are these?" I asked.

"Them? Them's quacks — them's frauds! humbugs! pre-natal murderers! forgers! convicts! and to sum 'em all up — rascals! and some of 'em are mighty big ones, too."

"They are not genuine doctors, then?" said I.

"Genuine — doctors!" exclaimed Jerks, contemptuously. "Wal, I guess not. No more'n I'm one. Only diploma they've got is from State Prison or House of Correction. I swan! Ef I don't think they are the biggest humbugs of all. Don't know no more about medicine than a hen does of geology. They've most all of 'em been taken up, and sent to prison for some crime, from passing counterfeit money to killing innocent babes. Sir, I tell ye, they're a mighty mean set. But hold on. Jes' wait a minute till I fetch out another fact."

And Jonathan again dived into his pockets and brought forth an old envelope, scribbled over from top to bottom.

"Ah! Here's my memorandum," said he, trying to decipher his own scrawls. "Wal, sir, here is facts. Good, solid, substantial facts. Wal, to begin with, there's about two hundred irreg'lar doctors in Boston. Wal, sir, out of that 'ere two hundred, there's only four as has got diplomas from any college. Some of 'em advertise 'Board and Nursing.' They'll take any case from \$5 to \$500 or \$1,000. By Jiminy! it's a tarnation shame they ain't in State Prison, where they belong, the whole caboodle of 'em."

And Jonathan pranced around in his indignation, wrenching his hand like a stove grate, threatening to make it hot for them.

"Well, Jerks," said I, "what is your next batch of facts."

"Here they are, right down in black and white," said Jonathan, turning his envelope over. "Number seven is a crusher. It's Sabbath desecration. Why, sir, Sunday in Boston is almost a holiday. Yes, sir, jes' as sure as I'm a sinner. Why, jes' look at the excursions, the concerts, the theatrical seances. Think of it, and in Puritan Boston, too. Gosh geewhilkly! I'm thunderstruck. Why, there are eight railroads runnin' sixteen trains Sunday. Steamboats an' yachts innumerable down the harbor, all bound for fun an' frolic. Then, sir, there are more'n a thousand rum-shops goin' it lickity-split all day Sunday and a big piece into the night."

"Yes, my agents have reported them in full blast Sundays as well as other days," I replied.

"I should say so," cried Jerks, emphatically. "Why, they make more money Sunday than any other day of the week. Customers come right from church into the rum-shop and guzzle down poor gin and whiskey like greased lightning. But the worse thing of the whole, an' what ought to make the old Puritans almost turn in their graves, is these here 'spiritual seances,' as they call 'em. Why they seem to have enamost taken the place of the prayer-meeting, with their table-tipping, hand-showing, moving of pianos, an' strumming of guitars, an' the whole lot of humbug, an' all done, too, in the name of religion. Jehokey! Ef this ain't barefaced swindlin', then I don't know what is."

And Jonathan showed his indignation all over, jerking his head and twisting himself in all manner of shapes.

"Great Jehosophat Stubs!" he exclaimed, bringing his hand down heavily on his thigh, "an' this is Boston! Wal, I swow! Ef I don't believe it's about as bad as Paris. Yes, sir, gambling, drinking, bad houses, Sunday desecration — wal, I swanny! ef Boston ain't in a pretty bad fix. I've took a job to help reform her, but I guess I got a bigger job on hand than I thought I had," — turning up his elbow as if it was not big enough to turn the machine.

CHAPTER VI.

MIDNIGHT AT THE HUB. — MY OWN EXPLORATIONS.

Not alone did I trust to the reports of my agents. I was constrained to go and see for myself. A voice from the street called me; the burden of the city was upon me. A prophet of warning stood by my side, and said, "Sleeper, awake! awake! Art thou a watchman? Dost thou slumber? The burden of Boston's sins be upon thee! Her crimes shall alarm thee! Her blood will I require at thy hand." His form was as the shade of night. His face shone as the stars; and his voice was as the voice of doom. Roused by that dread spectre I was led to the street.

It was midnight. Alone I started on my explorations into the Dark Ways and By-Ways of Boston. A thick mist hung over the city. That mist, however, was not so dense as the cloud of Boston's mysteries and crimes. The hand on the dial of the Old South pointed upward to twelve. It was the noon of night. Hark! That mournful note "*Gling! Clang! Toll! Toll! One—two—three*"—up to twelve.

A great wave of solemn sound vibrates over the city. Steeple responds to steeple, belfry to belfry. That sound seems like the moaning of a lost spirit, uttering its lament of "*Woe! Woe! Woe!*" to the young men of Boston. I met no watchman as of old, crying, "All's Well! All's Well." For alas! It is not well—it is *ILL* with Boston!

Seven theatre trains have just borne off their rural loads! rumbling over the city drawbridges, over the dark waters where lie lost and hidden from mortal ken the countless unreported dead! No flash of headlight can reveal their sepulchre! No sound of whistle awake them! No cannon's roar bring them to the surface! Not alone that poor girl found floating by a drawbridge near Boston, visited by two hundred anxious people, each searching for a lost friend. Think of it! Those people represent two hundred sorrowing homes, two hundred bleeding hearts. Can it be! Merciful heaven! Can it be possible that there are two hundred missing women in and around Boston at one time!

As I strayed through the streets the dark curtain of midnight was pierced by myriads of flashing lights. Strains of bacchanalian song, drunken shouts and ribald laughter greeted my ear. Here I passed dwellings, former abodes of aristocracy, now changed to

haunts of the vile. There once happy homes, now pest-houses of crime.

Follow me as I invoke the spirit of Asmodeus, lift the roofs of the houses, remove the walls and unveil Boston's mysteries. Here we discover the secret of her degeneracy. Let us peer into the curtained chamber, tread the hidden arcades where pleasure holds high carnival, and behold the altars burning with incense to the genius of vice and crime. Now is the hour sacred to the rites of Anatis, Bel and Jezebel. Two hundred gaming-tables click and rattle, breathing hope and despair at the cast of the die or turn of the card. Two thousand liquor saloons blaze on the cheek of night with seductive invitation.

Here is a street of fifty houses once occupied by respectable owners, now leased to doubtful occupants, all kept for lodgers, save two; and "*no questions asked!*" Three-fourths of these lodgers are females, half of them having no visible occupation. One hundred women in one short street living in idleness and vice! Here Piper struck with the hammer his sleeping victim before murdering Mabel Young. Here Julia Hawkes was met by Costello and let out to be murdered. Here Jennie Clark met her seducer, and was led to the foul den from which she never returned. Here a gay bank cashier met the actress who caused his ruin. Through her he became a defaulter to the sum of \$40,000. Here the nephew, instigated by his mistress, planned the robbery of his uncle's safe, obtaining \$30,000. Here a fast young man, driven to desperation by fear of discovery, went out to take his life because he had embezzled \$300 from his employers.

This street is notorious in the annals of crime. Yet Boston has many such streets. Here are miles on miles of lodging-houses instead of homes. Thousands of young men have only a private room, without a fire, destitute of all endearing charms. With no fond ties of affection; no wife, mother, sister, or child to make home dear; no sweet meal blessed by love's tender smiles. A solitary room, a lunch out, without a kind word or a friend to cheer; or a night in the street, in a saloon, at some cheap place of amusement or more doubtful resort; then returning to his cheerless chamber, to wait the coming of weary morn.

Such is clerk life, shop life, single life in Boston. No wonder people thus exposed yield to the temptations of false love, fall into the net, seek mediums and questionable affinities to soothe their lonely hours.

No city on the continent has so many disreputable Mediums, Clairvoyants, Wizards, and Fortune-tellers as the Puritan city of Boston. No city but Boston would allow such performances as they give on Sunday, and especially Sunday night. The city that once hanged Quakers, scourged Baptists, and drowned witches, now patronizes and protects witchcraft of the vilest kind. It has more than two hundred witches in the shape of Spiritual Mediums, Mesmerists, and Clairvoyants. But few are found in the directory, they change their names so often. Some answer to several names,—physicians, electric and magnetic healers, dressmakers, housekeepers, and managers of happy marriages. Their signs are seen everywhere, more than a hundred of them on disreputable houses.

The disinterested wizard and fortune-teller can fill any order, supply any demand, material or spiritual. Great is the power of humbug. The majority of mankind seem to enjoy being humbugged. The first man that ever started out in life was humbugged—Adam! He got humbugged by his better half—the Woman. He *kinder sorter* liked it! So have all of Adam's children ever since. Humbug has a certain fascinating charm. We fall easy victims to its machinations.

Are you out of health? A medium will cure you for a dollar, by laying on of hands or the aid of the spirits. Just as you like: "You pays your money, gentlemens, and you takes your choice." Do you want to be a scholar without the trouble of studying? She will show you a "royal road to knowledge" for twenty-five cents! What trouble and toil we had to get our education! Now we can get it all complete for a quarter!

Do you want to learn to write without pen or ink? Send a dollar by mail. Answer comes back: "Letter and money received. Question: 'How to write without pen or ink?' Answer: *Write with a lead pencil, you fool, you!*" She will tell you a "Hundred Ways to Get Rich." No need of being poor, sick, lonely or Without a Wife. Send for a Book. Only 50 cents. That will tell you all. You can get a husband for a dollar. A wife for *fifty cents*. Goods are not warranted, however. They are not fast colors. *They run!*

Now we come to North Street. Hark! the fiddle and the dance! Hark! the midnight carousal! Who are these revellers? Who these tempters and the tempted? Alas! Mostly colored people. Old Ann Street is no longer monopolized by the reckless sailor and his Dulcinea. They have given place to freedmen from the South. Is it possible that freedmen have fallen so low? Is it pos-

sible that they have taken possession of Boston's lowest haunts? Let us see.

There where Father Mason held his great religious meetings—the "Black Sea"—now sounds the roll-call of the dance, click of glasses, fiddle and the jig. An herculean son of Afric strides up and down the floor, shouting:—

"Choose partners fo' de las' set. Las' dance ob de night. Five couples wanted. Here dey come. Two couple moah! One couple moah! Now dar de set all full! Now den, all ready! Strike up de music!"

The floor trembles with the commotion. Thump! thump! thump! The caller cries: "Balance to partners. Ladies' grand chain! All promenade! All hands around! Right hand to partners! Grand right and left! Swing partners! All *chausee*! Yaw! Yaw! Yaw!" So much for the Negro dance. The scene is like pandemonium.

In the midst of the din and tumult three young white men came noisily into the hall, evidently intoxicated. They were fashionably attired,—young "bloods," so called, apparently out on a "spree" or a "lark." A glance told that they belonged to the upper stratum of society. The features of one of them seemed familiar to me. He was tall and good-looking, but his face showed signs of constant dissipation. I could not at the moment recall where I had seen him.

The new-comers were immediately assailed by several of the frail creatures.

"Come, ducky, give us a treat, won't you?" said a young mulatto girl to the youth who had attracted my particular attention. She put her arm familiarly round his neck, and motioned toward the bar.

"You bet, sis," replied the other with a drunken leer, returning her caress. "That's just what (*hic*) I'm here for, to treat (*hic*) the girls and have some (*hic*) fun. So all hands *chausee* up to the (*hic*) bar. I'll stand the shot! Here, bar-keeper, take your (*hic*) pay out of that."

And with these words the besotted young man threw on the counter a ten-dollar bill. At the same moment I caught a closer view of his features and suddenly recognized him. It was Frank Gildersleeve,—the only son of my Paris acquaintance! One of his companions was a dentist, Dr. Richard Forceps.

But enough of them for the present. We shall meet Frank Gildersleeve and Dr. Forceps frequently anon in these pages.

But to resume : These colored people, some of them once slaves, whipped and branded, whose sufferings had won the sympathy of the whole North, are here in these pestiferous haunts throwing soul and body away. What slavery at the South could not do to degrade manhood, vice at the North is more than doing. I said, "Has it come to this, that men should so degrade themselves, be in deeper slavery in Boston, with free churches, free schools, reading-rooms, and free libraries, than when they were mere chattels ? Is it for this the North poured out her blood and treasure ? A million men in battle fell, their bones now bleaching on Southern soil. All this for the negro."

But is he worthy ? We erected monuments throughout the North, incurred a thousand millions of debt, and millions of people were made to mourn. Has it come to this, then, that freedom encourages more dissipation than bondage ? There is "something rotten in Denmark !" Here untutored freedmen fall into the snare, rot in filth and vice, die early and lose their souls. How long, O Lord, shall this thing be ? How long shall men be slain by vice more than by war ? How long shall Boston be thus degraded ? Up ! Up ! Up ! Ye men of Puritan Boston ! Raise a blast of indignation that shall purify her streets ; make it too hot for bad men to tarry ; fire the press, the pulpit and public opinion ; kindle a flame that shall burn to the lowest hell ; drive the plague spot from her face ; sweep like a simoom the pestilence from our midst ; start the avalanche of public sentiment ; hurl the thunderbolt of outraged justice ; say that Boston, enslaved Boston, by the help of God, shall yet throw off the shackles of vice, protect the freedmen, and herself be free !

Be content ! Be content, if possible, with your lot, oh ye colored men of the sunny South ! Boston's sins are death to the negro ! Boston's iceberg infidelity freezes the hopes and kills the soul ! Five hundred more deaths than births since the war ! What a drain on the colored race ! No inspiring soul-stirring plantation melodies ! No camp-meeting jubilations ! No shouts and hallelujahs that make the welkin ring with praises to God ! No bright anticipations of heaven and of meeting loved ones, such as constrain the ecstatic soul to cry, "Glory ! glory ! glory to God in the highest ! Salvation is free for you and me !"

Alas ! alas ! The negro in Boston has met his golgotha, and the disenthralled bondsman, the double fetters of sin and despair ! Weep, O Freedom ! and shudder, ye heavens, at the spectacle !

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE COMMON.—FRANK MEETS MINNIE.

It is Sunday night. The respectful quiet of the day is somewhat disturbed as the evening shades settle down. Crowds of promenaders fill the principal avenues. The umbrageous shade of the Common, its pleasant walks, inviting seats, the velvety richness of the grass, the cooling spray of the fountain in the Frog Pond, allure thousands to this green spot in the heart of the great city.

Two men are sauntering along the Beacon Street mall. They are Frank Gildersleeve and his constant companion, his *fidus achates*, Dr. Richard Forceps. Both are dressed in the height of the fashion, but a distinction between them can be seen at a glance. Frank's garments exhibit the good taste of one "to the manner born"; Forceps shows the "loud" and flashy tone of the servile imitator of gentility—the *parvenu*. Jewelry is conspicuous on the dentist's person; he seems to bristle at every point with gold and sparkling gems; diamond studs glisten in his cambric shirt bosom, *solitaire* rings flash on either delicate hand, which he takes every opportunity to display; as, for instance, when he raises his gold eye-glasses to his eyes, — a frequent habit, which he imagines adds to his *tout ensemble* a highly distinguished and impressive effect.

Suddenly the dentist pauses, turns partially toward two young girls who are passing, and with a grace which Beau Nash might have envied, raises his glossy hat.

"By Jove! What a pretty girl!" exclaimed Frank Gildersleeve as they resume their walk. "Who is she, Dick? How did you get acquainted? Where does she live?"

"Too many questions to answer in a breath, my dear fellow," responds the other. "Why are you so intensely interested about a woman you never saw before? You did not notice her dress, nor her cheap hat, nor her frayed gloves, I'll bet!"

"I only noticed that she had the loveliest face and the most graceful figure that I ever beheld!" said Frank, enthusiastically.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Forceps. "Well, you are a good judge, Frank. But she's only a poor girl; not *your* sort, at all, my boy. Who is she, you ask? I can't tell you exactly. All I know is that she is a customer of mine. She came in to the office with that same girl who was with her now, to have me look at a tooth that wants filling. She's from out of town, somewhere, I think.

She made an appointment to call at the office again to-morrow. And that's all the information I can give you."

"She is coming to you to-morrow, then?" said Frank. "I say, Dick, I'm coming too! I'd go ten miles to see such a fresh, innocent-looking face as that."

"Ha! ha! ha! You're really smitten, Frank. A case of love at first sight, I declare."

"Nonsense!" said the younger man, his face flushing. "Can't a man admire a pretty face without falling in love with its owner? But if I come, you'll introduce me, won't you, Dick?"

"Oh! of course! of course! since you're set on it. However, I advise you, remember, to give up the notion, and not bother about pretty girls who have to work for a living. Good gracious! What would your father say, or your proud and fashionable mamma, if they heard their only son had got into an entanglement with a poor working girl! But there — I was only joking; don't get wrathful, my boy!" he hastily added, as he saw that he had gone too far, and that his companion's face wore a displeased look.

The two soon after left the Common and took their way arm-in-arm down Boylston Street to Washington.

"Well met, Frank!" exclaimed one of three young men, who were approaching them; and immediately all five were exchanging salutations. The new-comers were friends and intimates of Frank Gildersleeve, who quickly introduced them to his companion.

"Will you and your friend join us?" said the one who had first spoken, and whose name was Harry Waters. He was the son of a wealthy wholesale merchant, and a clerk in his father's office, but much more given to spend his time on his pleasures than in the duties of the counting-room.

"Which way are you bound?" asked Frank.

"First to get a drink, and after that to see the sights, and so forth," said Waters, with a knowing wink.

"A drink, Sunday night, and in Boston!" exclaimed Forceps, in affected surprise. "It can't be possible! I thought Bostonians had to go dry *one* day in the week, certainly."

"Ha! ha! ha!" All hands joined in the merriment excited by Forceps' remark.

"Come along, doctor," said Waters, "and we'll prove what a mistaken notion you've got of Boston. We'll show you 'the ropes.'"

In reality, Dick Forceps could have shown them all what Harry

Waters called "the ropes," and many things besides in the dark and crooked ways of city life. There were few haunts of dissipation in Boston that he was not "posted" on; but he said nothing, and followed the rest to a fashionable saloon near by.

Within the bar-room — access to which was gained by a back door — a large company was assembled, smoking and drinking, while some were playing cards "for the drinks." It was no vulgar crowd; no "horny handed sons of toil" were to be seen; only men whose genteel exterior showed that they belonged to the higher social circles. There was no turbulence, no drunken tumult; the men drank and smoked, and laughed and jested, after the manner of "good society." But how many of those young men will date their utter ruin from that fashionable Sunday drinking-place!

This scene is repeated here every Sabbath, day and night. All over the city are similar resorts for Sunday drinking. Yet it is gravely asserted that Boston has no open bars on Sunday; that the police authorities rigidly enforce the Sunday law.

"Well, gentlemen, name your poison," said Harry Waters, as the party stood at the bar.

"Whiskey straight for me," said one.

"And mine's a sherry cobbler," said Frank.

"Ditto for me."

"And what is yours, sir?" asked the urbane barkeeper of Dr. Forceps.

"A lemonade," said the latter.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the young men.

"Wait a moment, gentlemen," said Forceps. "You didn't permit me to finish. A lemonade, barkeeper, but with a *stick in it*, if you please."

At the same time Forceps made an imperceptible sign to the barkeeper which the latter understood. The dentist was an old acquaintance, though pretending not to recognize him. When the lemonade was forthcoming there was not "stick" enough in it to hurt a fly.

Dick Forceps knew that he would have to drink many times before his companions left the saloon. Each, according to the *etiquette* of such meetings, would treat in turn, and the dentist had no notion of letting liquor get the best of him.

"When the wine is in the wit is out," says the proverb; and Forceps was too wary a scoundrel, he had too many dark secrets in his plotting brain, to run any such hazard.

At this moment Jonathan Jerks entered. He was on his tour of inspection into Boston's dark ways.

"Wal, I swow!" he cried, with a twitch of the eyes and a jerk of the head. "Gosh! If I thought I'd see you in this here den, Frank; mighty poor place, I swanny."

"Hullo, old fel," exclaimed Frank, cordially greeting Jonathan and winking to his companions. "Why, Jerks, ain't this a kinder tough place for *you* to be in, eh? Hurt your character, won't it?"

"Wal, guess I can stand it, ef the place can," returned Jerks. "Particularly as I don't take nothin'. I swan! What a plaguey sight of liquor I've seen sold to-day. By hokey! Ef I don't believe Sunday is almost a holiday in Boston. Why, I've been up to a rum-shop, right by the Cathedral. Wal, sir, I'm blest ef they didn't come right out from mass an' steer straight for that liquor-shop. Gosh! Why, I counted twenty-six go up to the bar an' drink in twenty minutes. Wal, then I went up to a place right near St. James' Church on Harrison Avenue. Why, sir, they came in through a side-door, after twelve o'clock service, jes' about as thick as fleas, an' got their 'bitters.' Counted fifty-five myself in less than an hour."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Waters. "You might stick in us five, and make an even sixty, eh?"

"Hullo, Jerks, so you're seeing the elephant, eh?" said Frank.

"Yes, sirree," returned Jonathan with emphasis. "I'm looking right into the bottom of the hub, you can bet."

"Well, come on, boys," said Harry Waters, interrupting. "Let's move on! 'Twon't do to stagnate, you know. Sunday only comes once a week."

And following him the rest of the party left the place.

"By gracious!" said Jonathan, looking after them. "And this is what they call the Lord-lovin' and law-abidin' city of Boston. Wal, it's enough to make a graven image weep ter see such goin's-on! Where's the Sunday laws? Where's the police, I'd like to know? I swow! ef Sunday liquor sellin' ain't one of the biggest evils I've struck yet in Boston."

CHAPTER VIII.

FRANK IN THE DENTIST'S OFFICE. — MINNIE TELLS HER HISTORY.

"So you are on hand, Frank, in spite of late hours?" said Dick Forceps, as Frank Gildersleeve came into the dentist's office at an early hour the following morning. The young man had a somewhat jaded look about the eyes. He was young in dissipation as yet, and its effects, together with the loss of sleep, left visible marks upon his fresh and handsome countenance. Forceps' face, however, told no tales. His potations were never deep. His cold and calculating nature prevented him from abandoning himself to the wild and reckless excesses of ardent youth. He was a sort of moral monster, who took a species of delight in encouraging the vices of others, while skilfully drawing his own profit from their weaknesses.

"You look as if you had been drawn through a knot-hole, my dear boy," continued the dentist. "This will never do, old fellow. Here, come into the operating-room, and bathe your red eyes with bay rum. Ah! That's better. Now, take a moderate swig of this cock-tail, and you'll be in decent trim to meet the fair Minnie when she arrives."

While speaking, Forceps had taken a bottle labelled "cocktail" from a cupboard, and turning a portion of its contents into a tumbler, passed the latter to the young man.

"You're right, Dick," said Frank, after tossing off the liquor. "I feel like a new man already. And now, what hour is the young beauty to be here? For, do you know, you didn't think to tell me the time appointed, and that's why I came down so early."

"It was arranged that she should come at eleven o'clock. It is now ten, so you will have a whole hour in which to curb your impatience. Sit down there in the reception-room and look at the papers. I've got some work to do."

"Look here, Dick," said Frank Gildersleeve, suddenly. "I've got an idea!"

"The deuce you have!" said the dentist, humorously, "That's more than many a rich young noodle can say," he added to himself. Then aloud: "Well, what is it?"

"Supposing you introduce me to the lovely Minnie as your partner? That would make the matter more natural, you see. I wouldn't have her suspect who I really am — a rich, idle young fel-

low, you know—for anything. She'd think I was a hawk right away, and the frightened little dove would take to her wings at once."

"Then you seriously intend to make love to the girl?" asked Forceps, curiously.

"I don't *intend* anything of the kind," rejoined Frank, hastily. "But what if I did? I shouldn't be the first rich man's son that had fallen in love with a poor girl, ay! and married her, too, for that matter!"

"Marry her!" exclaimed Dick Forceps, laying down the tools he was using and starting to his feet in surprise. "You don't mean to say you're such a romantic ninny as to think of such a thing as marriage! Reflect a moment, my dear fellow; you never saw the girl till yesterday, and then only for half a minute."

"You take it too seriously," Dick," answered the young fellow with a laugh. "This is counting the chickens before they are hatched. I have no intention even of falling in love with Minnie Marston. She's a marvellously pretty girl; she looks good and innocent; and I have taken a fancy that I would like to become acquainted with her. Now, will you do what I asked?"

"Introduce you as my partner, eh? Well, I suppose I shall have to, if you insist on it."

"You won't regret humoring my whims, Dick. You know I'm no niggard, and can afford to pay for all my fun."

"Oh! don't speak of pay between friends, my boy," said Forceps, in an injured tone. "You know I would do anything for you for mere friendship's sake."

"Of course you would, Dick. Don't I know what an easy, good-hearted fellow you are? But come! Give me a few lessons right off. Set me about something, so when she comes she can see I'm hard at work."

And the young man, as pleased with the notion as a child with a new toy, threw off his coat, and seated himself at the bench, while Forceps laughingly proceeded to initiate him into some of the mysteries of his craft.

It was while thus engaged that Minnie Marston entered the office. The introduction took place as prearranged. The young girl's modest demeanor and her sweet, charming face, completely captivated Frank Gildersleeve's fancy.

"You are a stranger in Boston, I believe, Miss Marston?" inquired Frank.

"Yes, sir. I have been here but a few weeks."

"You are from Maine, I should judge?"

"Not exactly, sir, though not far from it. My home is in New Hampshire, close by the White Mountains."

"Ah, indeed. I have always had a great desire to visit that wonderful region. If it would not be impertinent, may I ask what induced you to leave such a charming rural home for the great city?"

Minnie was silent for a moment, and when she spoke again there was a tremor in her voice.

"To answer that, sir, I must tell you something of my home and my parents. We are poor people, sir, though father owns a small farm under the shadow of one of the granite hills. Father was a minister, sir, but he has been unable to preach regularly. His severe lameness disables him from much labor. I could do little at home to help my dear mother and father—nothing at least by which I could earn anything to add to our frugal housekeeping, and so—and so I at last obtained father's consent to answer an advertisement in one of the Boston papers."

"Then you see the Boston papers even way up in New Hampshire?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. Tourists frequently stop in our vicinity, for the location is a very romantic and picturesque one. Oh! sir, I wish you could see my home. But please excuse me! I forgot I was speaking to a stranger who could not be interested in the subject."

There was an unconscious but very subtle flattery implied in these words, and they touched the young man's self-love quite pleasantly. Already this lovely but unsophisticated girl had forgotten that he was a stranger! The seeds of a life-long affection were insensibly germinating even then.

"Interested!" Frank exclaimed. "Oh, indeed, you have strongly awakened my interest in your beautiful home. Pray tell me about it."

Minnie thus urged described in simple but eloquent language the charming region in which she had been nurtured. Mountains upon mountains were the familiar objects of her childish admiration, and nestled in one of the numerous little valleys she pictured the moderate farm of a few acres which her father owned. She spoke of the beautiful summer skies, of the birds and flowers and rivers and the leaping cascades, of the grandeur of the winters, with their absence of all life, and frightful avalanches, etc., and Frank found himself sharing her enthusiasm and half inclined to start forthwith on a pilgrimage to this rural shrine.

"But we have drifted far away from the subject we were speaking about, Mr. Gildersleeve," Minnie said suddenly, and with a blush. "I can never speak of my home but I go into rapture over its beautiful scenery."

"Some people say that familiarity with scenery breeds contempt for it. With you I see it is far different. But you were speaking about answering an advertisement. I conclude that you received a favorable reply?"

"Yes, I secured a situation in a store in Boston. Goodsenough & Company advertised for saleswomen, and I was fortunate enough to be selected as one. So, Mr. Gildersleeve, you are talking, you see, to only a humble shop-girl."

"And I am but a poor dentist, Miss Minnie," he rejoined, blushing in spite of himself at the falsehood. "So in our social relations you and I are on the same level, you see, and I hope, — I sincerely hope, — that after a little longer acquaintance you will allow me to enroll myself among the number of your friends."

Minnie, in her ignorance of conventional customs, and in her innocent trust in all that was outwardly fair and true, did not hesitate to let the young fellow see that she already regarded him in a friendly light.

Forceps now came out of the operating-room, and interrupted their pleasant *tete-a-tete* for the time, announcing that he was now ready to attend to Minnie.

When the young girl left the dentist's office Frank happened to be going out at the same time, and thus it happened that he accompanied her to the house where she boarded in common with several of her fellow shopmates. And it was not the only time Frank found himself accompanying the young girl thither. The intimacy thus so pleasantly begun ripened gradually to a strong friendship, and eventually into a deeper sentiment on the part of both.

Alas! for the young girl's innocent trust in a stranger's honeyed words and flattering smiles!

CHAPTER IX.

MINNIE AT THE THEATRE. — JERKS ON BOSTON'S FUN.

One day Frank Gildersleeve invited Minnie Marston to go to the theatre. At the appointed time she was ready awaiting her lover, dressed in her best. Frank told her that he had never seen her looking so pretty, praised her neat attire, and uttered many soft flatteries that went to the very heart of the innocent girl.

And those lover-like speeches were sincerely uttered. The young man at that moment loved his charming companion purely and honestly.

The theatre was crowded. The lights and music, the brilliant dresses of the ladies, the fairy-like scene revealed at the going up of the curtain, fairly intoxicated the senses of the young girl.

The play was one of those which the era of the "Black Crook" introduced to the stage, — a play splendid in its "setting," but in its characters, action, and plot appealing to the senses rather than to the intellect. As the curtain went up the stage exhibited a blaze of splendor. All that art could do was lavished in the decoration of the scene. A beautiful garden was presented; the trees bending with luscious fruit. Flowers bloomed everywhere in picturesque profusion. The music of falling water added to the reality of the scene. It was a picture of fairy-land, and to the entranced senses of the young girl seemed as if birds must be hopping among the branches. She really fancied she could scent the odor of the flowers, and hear the wind softly rustling amid the foliage.

The play commenced. Two figures came out upon the stage, a young man and woman, servants of the lovely princess, the heroine of the play. They went through a pert dialogue which had for its object the introduction of their mistress on the scene. Then came a burst of music, a hush of expectation on the part of the audience, and the princess, attended by a numerous train of female attendants, entered, almost as devoid of apparel as the first inhabitants of Eden. A storm of applause greeted them. But a blush mounted to Minnie's cheek. The actions, the postures, the fantastic *pirouetting*, the suggestive, even wanton gestures, shocked and horrified the delicate mind of the young girl. For a single instant she gazed in silent wonder on the scene, and then quickly averted her burning face.

At last she timidly raised her eyes to Frank Gildersleeve's face;

but his gaze was intently fixed on the stage. Then she looked shyly round at the audience. She saw old men with their wives and daughters, young men and tender maidens, and all looking with interested eyes, like her lover on the dazzling scene before them. She saw no modest shrinking there. But Minnie was sick at heart, notwithstanding. She gently touched her companion's arm.

"Please take me home, Frank," she whispered. "I—I do not feel very well. Pray take me home!"

"Impossible, Minnie," he said, looking at her with an amused smile. Her flushed and downcast face told him at once the cause of her distress. "You are merely dazzled and bewildered at the novelty of the thing. Look round you, my dear. When you're in Rome you must do as the Romans do, you know. You will soon get accustomed to this sort of thing."

"Oh! no! no! I cannot remain here longer, Frank," she whispered. "Please—please let us go!"

"But think a moment, Minnie," he replied. "If we go out now, we shall draw the attention of all these people, besides disturbing the play. It would be ridiculous. There, my dear! Do not mind it. You will be all right in a minute."

Minnie felt the truth of what he had said. To go out just at the opening of the play in the face of that crowded assemblage would be, now she reflected on it, like running a gauntlet. No, she would stay, but she could not, *would not* again look on the stage. So she told herself; and so many a young girl whose sense of modesty and propriety has been grievously shocked by her first sight at the improprieties, not to say indecencies, of the "play of the period," has likewise felt. But Minnie could not keep her resolution. She was attracted to the brilliant scene in spite of herself. And when the lovely heroine of the piece came forward and sang a simple song, but in a voice whose trained powers entranced every ear and thrilled every heart, Minnie yielded to the spell, and for the rest of the evening gave her rapt attention to the progress of the story.

Thus the pure, the beautiful, the innocent Minnie Marston, far from the protection of her country home, bereft of the influence of parents, church, and friends, took her first lesson in the wiles of city life. Took her first steps on the pleasant pathway of temptation.

Will she awake to her peril? Or will her unwary feet be tangled in those snares ever set for the unsuspecting? Snares that lure to the dark waters of sensuality, at last to overwhelm in sin, sorrow, and despair.

Frank, after parting with Minnie at her boarding-house, met Jonathan Jerks strolling down the street.

"Hullo, Frank! why, is that you?" exclaimed Jonathan, almost crushing Frank's hand in his friendly grasp. "Wal, how de du? Where've you been? Why, I swow! hain't seen you since last time!"

"Oh! I've just come from the theatre," said Frank. "Saw the 'Black Demon; or, The Serpent's Doom.' 'T was first rate, too."

"Wal! wal! these 'ere theatres are mighty mean places," said Jerks emphatically, as if about to turn his crank of reform on Boston's amusements. "I raally believe, now, they do more'n most anythin' else ter git a feller started on the down'ard road. Yes, by hokey! an' a girl, too, for that matter. An' then jes' look at the shows they put on! Why, great Jehosophat! they're a disgrace ter the country, I swow! Why, the drama nowadays is half naked women, an' t' other half silly nonsense. Gosh! it's too all-fired, tarnation bad! They oughter shut 'em up smack. Folks would get some sense then, an' go ter meetin's an' lecters, an' where they'd learn somethin.' Yes, sir, they oughter be shut up short, them's my opinions right down flat."

"Oh! I guess the theatres won't hurt me," said Frank in a bantering tone. "They help kill time, you know."

"Wal, I guess they du," said Jonathan, jerking his head in assent. "But I tell you it's a plaguy poor way ter kill time. We hain't got none too much time in this 'ere world, an' wastin' it in them theatres is all humbug. Yes, an' then look at the cost of it, too. Why, I swan! ef Boston don't pay out a pile for sport an' fun. Jes' look! there's ten reg'lar theatres, all a-runnin' full blast, an' about twenty irreg'lar theatres in the shape of spiritool seances. You can go ter the reg'lar theatres on week days, an' ter the spiritool theatres on Sunday."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Frank, good-humoredly. "That's a big convenience to city folks, eh?"

"Wal, it's a tarnation shame, I swan ef 't aint!" exclaimed Jonathan, nodding his head, and twitching his eyes in his indignation. "Why, a'most the hul of Boston is a-runnin' arter amusement,—theatres, horse-racin', boat-racin', wrestling matches, cat shows, an' dog shows. Why, great hokey! Boston folks seem to be half crazy on amusements. Why, the pesky papers don't seem ter have anythin' else, scarcely, 'cept sports an' theatricals. They give a couple o' columns to an interview with a pedestrian, an' about six lines ter notice

a sermon. Gosh all hemlock! Don't wonder there's so many feller's a loafin' round an' hangin' on their aunts for a livin'."

"You're right, Jerks," said Frank. "Fellow can't afford to patronize theatre and shows unless he's got money."

"No sirree! Not much," returned Jerks. "I believe in work — good, solid *work*. But great Joshua Pease! ef there ain't a big caboodle of young sprigs a-wastin' their time on amusements, an' spongin' their bread an' cake outer their folks. They ought ter be made ter work. Put a hoe in their paws, an' say, 'Now scratch for yourself, an' earn your own grub.' Why, there was one feller I knew. minister's son, too. Used ter spend all his time at these tarnation old shows an' theatres. Would spend his last quarter ter go ter the theatre, ef he had ter sleep in the station-house. Sure ter have a cigar, even ef he went without his breakfast ter git it. Gosh! wa'n't he an all-fired fool!"

And Jonathan twisted himself about and oddly showed his intense disgust.

"Yes, sir, I tell you what! The Legislature oughter pass a law ag'in sech pesky critters. Oughter say no man shall spend his time a-loafin' 'round theatres an' shows while spongin' his bread an' board. No, sir! I tell you no man should play trump who is too all-fired honest ter work, an' too lazy ter steal! An' no man oughter smoke more'n ten cigars a day, either, who is a-livin' on his aunt. They're followin' up the Scriptor rayther too clus — '*Go to the ANT, thou slug-gard.*' But I rayther reckon they go ter the wrong *ant*. They spell it a-u-n-t. T' other kind would kick 'em out in no time. *They* are too tarnation smart ter stand any loafin' 'round *them*, I can tell you!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Frank. "You're right, Jerks. *They're* too cute for that. Well, good night. Hope you'll turn the crank on the Hub, and make things fly lively."

"Wal, guess I'll do it, or bust!" said Jonathan, solemnly.

And Frank, after shaking Jerks cordially by the hand, wended his way to his home on Beacon Hill.

CHAPTER X.

FRANK AND FORCEPS AT FARO BANK.—JERKS "TURNING THE CRANK."

One evening Dr. Forceps sat in his office when Frank Gildersleeve came in.

"Hallo, Dick!" said the young man, "what's up to-night? Aren't you stopping rather late?"

"Well, I thought I would do a little work this evening, but I don't feel much like it. Sit down and help yourself to a cigar. And how goes your suit with the fair Minnie?"

Frank was silent for a minute or two. At last he said:—

"Dick, Minnie Marston is one girl out of a thousand. By Jove! If she only belonged to *upper tendom*! If she only moved in *our* society!"

"Perhaps if she did she would not be such a paragon as you make her out to be," answered Forceps.

"Look out, Dick. That's a slur on me and mine. But I don't believe it. Minnie would grace any station. And in any station I believe she would still be the same noble, high-minded, and virtuous girl. She is a treasure of innocence, purity, and good principle. We are scoundrels, Dick Forceps, to be concocting these schemes for undermining her virtue."

"Pshaw, my boy! Every one has a price. If you fail in all other means, a little judicious flattery will bring her to your feet.

"Then Minnie Marston is an exception to the rule. I tell you she is incorruptible.

"Don't you believe it," said Forceps, knocking the ashes from his cigar. "Every woman has vanity, and she is no exception to the rest of the sex. But a new idea occurs to me, Frank."

"Well, let us hear it."

"You must take Minnie to a fortune-teller, — a clairvoyant. I know one that for a few dollars will fall into our views and cook up a nice little dish for our young friend from the rural districts. By Jove! It's the best thing yet!"

"I am willing to try it; but rely on it, Dick, the plan will fail like all the rest."

"I don't know about that," said the dentist. "If it should not succeed, however, there is a last resort — one that *won't* fail!"

"And what is that?"

"No matter now. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' you know. Let us try the clairvoyant first. Rest assured, however, with one thing, Frank, Minnie Marston shall yet be yours by fair means or —"

"But let us drop the matter for to-night. What do you say to going round town and seeing the elephant?"

"You showed him to me pretty effectually the other night when you took me through the North-End dance-houses," said Frank. "I got enough of *that* elephant for one while."

"I will show you a quadruped of another color to-night, then. What do you say to the 'tiger,' now, instead of the elephant? You have never seen the game of faro played, have you?"

"No. My education, you see, has been sadly neglected in that line. I'd like to behold the animal, though. But faro requires money, I take it?"

"Generally — yes," said Forceps, dryly.

"Luckily the 'governor' tossed me a couple of hundreds to put in the bank. Ahem! If I deposit it in a faro-bank, that will be carrying out instructions in letter if not in spirit, eh?"

And the young men laughed at his facetiousness, and Forceps laughed still louder. The dentist's cue was to flatter his young dupe to the top of his bent; for Frank's friendship was a mine of gold to him, and Dick Forceps required a goodly supply of the precious metal or its equivalent for his growing needs.

"Come along, then," said the dentist, rising. "We'll go and buck the tiger as long as the money holds out. The royal animal holds forth in a good many places in Boston; but I know one of his favorite haunts, where we shall find the biggest nobbs and swells of Boston. There you can become acquainted with some of the very saints philosophers, and the *elite* of the modern Athens. Don't be astonished at anything you see there."

Dr. Forceps conducted his young companion to one of the most celebrated club-houses of Boston. Ostensibly a club-house; really a fashionable gambling resort.

"You have made me your 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' Frank," said Forceps, and I'm bound to put you straight through the alphabet of city life. There's nothing like it for a young man just entering upon life. It ought to be an essential part of the training of a young fellow in your sphere of society. When you begin to grow old, then it will be time enough to haul your bark up into the

wind; but youth is the season for enjoyment. You know the old song —

‘Go it while you’re young, boys,
For when you get old you can’t.’”

It was through such pernicious teachings as these that Frank Gildersleeve was gradually slipping down the steep descent of vice. He was like many a youth, brought up amid the alluring temptations of the city, without moral ballast and with an unlimited supply of money furnished by the injudicious liberality of doting parents. How many times in after life would he look back upon these first steps in sin, and curse with bitterest maledictions the man whom he now regarded as the truest of friends; the man who was surely leading him down to destruction!

Did no thought of Minnie Marston ever occur to Frank Gildersleeve in the midst of his dissipations? Did not the influence of her love, her purity, her fervent piety, seek to draw him back from the deadly brink of vice? Yes, many, many times! But there was an evil genius forever at his side in the person of Richard Forceps, whose influence was more potent still. And the Evil Genius triumphed over the Good Angel!

The scene in the gambling-house was one to dazzle and enchant a youthful imagination. Soon young Gildersleeve partook of the excitement which he saw painted on the faces of the players. Forceps explained the principles of the game, and taking out some money made several small bets. He won invariably, and Frank was easily induced to follow his companion's example. The luck which it is said always accompanies a new beginner did not desert Frank Gildersleeve that night. Long after midnight he and the dentist remained at the club-house, and when they left Frank had doubled the sum of money that he originally commenced with.

“Here, Dick,” he said, giving Forceps a handful of bills, “I’ll go shares with you. You were not so lucky as I was. I don’t need the money for anything particular, and if I did the governor will come down with the spondulicks whenever I ask him, you know.”

Coming out of the faro bank, Frank and Forceps met Jonathan Jerks on the sidewalk, looking up at the blinded windows of the house.

“I swan! Frank, is that you?” cried Jonathan, grasping Frank by the hand. “Why, great Joshua! who’d a-thought ter see you a-comin’ out of this ’ere den. Why, my boy, d’ye know that’s one of the biggest gambling hells in Boston?”

"Hullo! Jerks, that you?" greeted Frank, cordially. "How are you? So you're going to reform the Hub? Well, you've got hands full."

"Wal, I have got a pretty hefty job," replied Jonathan, nodding his head. "But I'll tackle it. I'll turn the crank on to 'em an' make the splinters fly. But I say," whispering in Frank's ear, "that's a tarnation mean place. Hope you hain't lost no money nor nuthin'."

"Not much," said Frank, laughing. "Made a couple of hundred instead."

And Frank showed Jerks a large roll of bills.

"Wal! wal! I'm sorry for you!" said Jerks, looking as solemn as an owl. "So they let you win a little, eh, jes' ter lead you on? Oh! They know you've got money, an' they're bound ter git it, too. Wal, I only wished you'd lost, now, 'cause it might have teach'd you a good lesson. But you're sure ter lose it in the end. You can rely on that. They don't run these 'ere banks ter throw away money, not much. Why, land a-massy! there was a man I knew — a big merchant — got pulled into a gambling den right here in Montgomery Place. Oh! They soft-soaped him nice, I tell ye. 'Ah! won't you take dinner — 't won't cost nothing,' they said. Gave him high-tone stuff, best wines an' liquors, an' didn't charge him a red cent. Wal, sir, the ropers-in tackled him: 'Say, did you see that feller win \$600 last night?' they said. An' they told over what piles of cash they'd raked in at faro. Why, they got the pesky feller so excited by tellin' how easy it was to win, that he went whack off an' lost \$20 the first lick."

Jonathan broke into a laugh and rolled his eyes and twisted himself about as if highly tickled at the merchant's poor luck.

"Wal, of course he wa'n't goin' ter lose money like that," continued Jerks, with a wink. "He couldn't afford it. So he planked down \$100. Was a-goin' ter git back his money and \$80 besides, accordin' ter his reckonin'. But the tarnation thing didn't work right. Gosh! he lost that, too! Wal, sir, that great goose hung on, tooth an' nail, till he'd lost \$15,000,—every plaguy copper he had, an' then went ter losing his creditors' money. Slid through \$10,000 in about the fastest time on record, an' brought up plumb without a cent ter his name. Moment he'd lost every red, he got his eyes open, of course, Wal, then he sailed in an' tried another racket. Sued the boss an' another feller, the two biggest gamblers in Boston. Wal, finally they settled the thing by lettin' him have \$700, ef

he'd git up an' git, an' never come back ter Boston agin. Great Jehosophat! When he'd got \$700 outer'n the \$25,000 he'd fooled away gamblin', he felt like a fightin' cock — he'd made somethin' outer the gamblers arter all!"

"Oh, well," said Frank, "I guess I'll know when to stop. When they get as much money as that out of me, they'll know it."

"Yes," said Forceps, "Frank is a little too shrewd for them."

"Wal, sir, you'll have ter wake up mighty early in the mornin' ter get ahead of the gamblers. They'll skin you out of your eye-teeth, a'most. Gosh! There was a young Connecticut feller came ter Harvard ter get edicated. His dad had the cash an' wanted his son ter know somethin'. Wal, the young sprig used ter loaf 'round the Parker House — o' course you know that's the headquarters, as 't were, of Harvard — an' got ter goin' rayther steep. Got roped into the high-toned gamblin' den on Beacon Street. Wal, I tell you there wa'nt nothing scarey about him. He'd 'buck the tiger' to his last cent, an' then borrow money ter keep at it. Jes' as leave spend his friends' money as his own — rayther, I guess. Wal, pop kept a-sendin' him money like all Jerusalem! An' the young chip kept a-writin' back: 'O pa! the money you sent I've lost. Oh dear! please send some more.'"

"Wal, he didn't lie; he had lost the money, only he forgot ter think the young blood could lese money a plaguy sight quicker'n he could earn it. Why, the cheeky fellow even borrowed money from a tailor an' told him ter send a fat bill for clothes which he hadn't had ter his dad. By hokey! the old man couldn't stand it any longer. Edication was a-costin' a leetle too much ter suit him. Wal, he come ter Boston, found the young feller, paid his debts, an' took him home by the fust train."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Frank. "Guess he found the young fellow knew a sight too much, eh?"

"Or perhaps he thought he could educate him cheaper at home," put in Forceps with a smile. Well, I presume he's only a type of hundreds."

"Yes, sir, you hit it smack now," said Jerks with emphasis. "There's any quantity of young fellers," looking at Frank significantly, "that's a-going it mighty fast, an' if they ain't careful, they'll fetch up mighty short."

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIBYL INVOKED.—MINNIE HAS HER FORTUNE TOLD.

"Come, Minnie," said Frank, a few nights after the visit to the faro bank, "what do you say to having your fortune told? Young ladies are generally anxious to know what the future holds in store for them, I believe."

"I hardly know what to say, Frank. Perhaps there is no harm in it, but if I was at home I do not think my friends would approve of my consulting a fortune-teller."

"O, your friends are too straitlaced, Minnie. Perhaps they would not have approved of your going to the theatre, and yet you saw nothing very wrong there."

"I fear your ideas of wrong and mine, Frank, are somewhat different," said Minnie. "I am country bred and have always been taught to avoid the very appearance of evil. But of this I feel sure, that you would not ask me to go to any place where you would hesitate to take a sister."

"Assuredly not, dear Minnie. You will go with me, then?"

Minnie's curiosity was aroused to such a degree and her confidence in Frank so complete, that she raised no further objections, and consented to accompany him.

Poor moth, how thou dost flutter and play about the candle that is so soon to singe thy wings. God help thee! poor girl. Oh, that He would put it into the heart of brother or friend to come and rescue thee from the fascination of the serpent, to break the spell and draw thee out of danger ere the coils are wrapped around thee and the envenomed fangs fasten on thy purity. Pure maiden, fair flower, sweet bud of innocence, little dost thou know of the storm that is darkening the horizon of thy young life! Little dost thou know that clouds are gathering above thy head! Heaven guard thee! heaven help thee; for the hour of thy trial draws near.

"This way, sir, and madam; this way, step softly; miss is in a trance. She will be out of it soon, and then you will be attended to."

So said the Abigail of the fortune-teller to Frank and Minnie, who, heeding the injunction "Don't Ring," pasted on the side of the door, had ascended the stairs to the landing of the second floor.

They were not kept waiting long, and soon were ushered into a room where in the depths of an arm-chair sat the seer, or the *seeress* rather, for the prophet was a woman.

Yes, a woman, and one who aimed to be thought young; but as an aimer she would never have taken rank as a sharp-shooter, for notwithstanding the paint and the powder, the ruffles and frizzes, the "idiot fringe" and the paste and plated jewelry, the lines on the brow, the crows' feet under the eyes, the scraggy neck and attenuated bust, all told a tale of Time.

Her eyes met those of Frank with a quick glance of recognition and intelligence; but otherwise she received him as a perfect stranger.

The clairvoyant smiled benevolently on Minnie.

"If you have come to have your fortune told," she said, "my task will be easy; for the future can hold nothing but good in store for such a sweet face as yours, young lady."

Minnie blushed and said, somewhat impatiently, "I did not come here to be flattered, madam. I came to have my fortune told."

The sibyl dropped her eyelids, and rubbing one hand over the other, said:—

"Well, then, my dear, what do you prefer,—the tea-grounds, cards, or clairvoyance?"

Minnie looked to Frank for instructions.

"O hang it," said he "let's have all three. If a thing's worth doing at all it's worth doing well. Never mind the cost; go ahead. Give us the tea-grounds first, then the cards, and then you can disembody yourself and let the spirits take possession of you, and we'll hear what *they* have to say about it."

A cup was brought containing a little tea and tea-grounds.

Minnie was directed by the fortune-teller to shake the cup gently and then invert it on a table, keeping her hand for a moment on the bottom.

The directions were complied with.

The seeress then took the cup in her hand and gazed into it for a moment.

"A young man and a young woman," she said at last. "Ah! I see. I see; happy, happy love! Some little clouds in the sky, but they quickly disappear. Yes; now the sky is clear. Ah! what is this? Bridesmaids, groomsman, and a handsome couple! Ha! ha! That's what the cup tells, but I may be wrong. Say, am I?" drooping her languishing eyelashes over the crows'-feet, and turning to Minnie.

Minnie looked at Frank in surprise.

"By Jove!" exclaimed he. "You're not far out of the way! Try the cards."

The cards were shuffled, and of course turned up the young man and young woman, and the bridesmaids and the groomsmen, and all surrounded by the same auspicious circumstances.

But the seeress capped the climax when she went into a trance, in which condition she was assisted by her Abigail, who put the questions to which she made replies.

ABIGAIL. — "Whose spirit has possession of the body of my mistress?"

SEERESS. "The spirit of Hahahoopahoop, the great medicine man of the Six Nations."

ABIGAIL. "Do you know the future?"

SEERESS. "I do; hurry, for your mistress will be greatly exhausted if you keep me long."

ABIGAIL. "Who are these persons here?"

SEERESS. "Two sincere lovers who wish to pierce the veil of the future."

Minnie stole a blushing look at Frank.

ABIGAIL. "Will you reveal what the future has in store for them?"

SEERESS. "These two shall be wed according to the laws of man, although there is no need of it, for they are now wedded in the sight of heaven. They are as much man and wife now as they ever will be, for they love and trust one another. Marriage is nothing; it is merely a recognition, a compliance with human custom. We in the spirit world do not consider marriage as a tie to bind two loving hearts. When a couple mate, they mate, marriage or no marriage. Were these two to live as man and wife, without any marriage ceremony, they would be as pure in the sight of heaven as if they were married by five hundred priests or ministers or an army of justices of the peace. Marriage is a curse. Two hearts mating is heaven's law. Do the birds marry? Those sweet songsters of heaven who fill the air with their melody and make all nature rejoice. Does the lion who roams the forest and makes all other beasts tremble with his roarings, marry? No; he mates as the birds mate; takes his partner for life and sticks true to her, forages for, protects her, fights for her, and dies for her! Love is all! Love is mighty! Love conquers everything!"

The sibyl paused as if for breath, and then continued: —

"The young man here understands all this, appreciates it and approves of it. For he has been educated in a liberal school. He is a transcendentalist in religion; he believes in the divinity of culture, despises all forms and ceremonies and only acts in accordance with the dictates of an approving conscience. He has weighed orthodoxy in the balance and found it wanting. He has studied the narrow minded sects who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. He is disgusted with them and strikes out for himself. He has found the open sea and now floats pleasantly along, an honor to his friends and an example to society. With the young lady, — beautiful, pure, and good, an angel in human guise, — it is different. She is hedged in and fenced about with the gloom of Puritanism, the opaque atmosphere of orthodoxy. Everything that savors of liberality, of liberty, of culture, offends her preconceived notions, outrages her deeply-seated principles, and causes her, like the chased ostrich which hides its head in the desert sands, to fly for refuge to and hide herself behind a text of Scripture or an aphorism such as 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' or, like Bunyan, putting her fingers in her ears and crying 'Eternal life! eternal life!' Poor girl! she is rather to be pitied than blamed. Remember her training, the gloom that has surrounded her from childhood, the fact that she has been gorged with the principles of the idiotic and austere people who burned witches and persecuted Quakers.

"But enough of this. The two will be one according to human law as they are now one in heart; the young man out of his deep love for her will sink all his intelligent notions to satisfy her scruples. But should he not, they are still one in the sight of heaven, and no earthly power can separate them, nothing can drag them asunder; he is hers and she is his, blessing on her sweet face! Adieu!"

The seeress slowly came to life and gazed about her with a vacant stare.

"You are very much exhausted," said the Abigail.

"And I am very much disgusted," said Minnie, indignantly rising to her feet. "Frank, take me home. I know you cannot approve of this blasphemy."

Frank hung his head sheepishly, silently gave Minnie his arm, and they passed from the house.

"If that was a spirit," said Minnie, "it said you approved of it all."

"It is very strange," said Frank, cautiously.

"Strange! You surely do not indorse what that woman said?"

"Perhaps not. And yet she told so much that was true that I hardly know what to think," said Frank, dubiously.

Minnie looked at him in surprise.

"Surely," she said, "you have no doubts as to her wicked ideas about marriage?"

"Why not?" asked the young man, raising his eyes and looking at her steadily.

"Because," said Minnie, making an attempt to withdraw her arm from his, and failing to do so, bursting into tears, "Because, if such is the case, I must give up your company entirely."

Frank Gildersleeve saw at once how vain this precious scheme had been. Minnie had stood the test. It was plain that her principles were not to be corrupted. Both the dentist and the dupe he was leading to ruin had underestimated the young girl's strength of character.

The danger of losing Minnie entirely, the fear that she would give up his company as she had threatened, alarmed the young man. His passions had been strongly stirred by her beauty. He loved her, though his love had in it no element of purity, truth or honor. So he said, hastily, —

"You mistake me, dear Minnie. I was only trying you. Forgive me, my dear. If I had dreamed of what has occurred, I certainly would never have taken you to that place. No, my dearest Minnie, I do not believe that creature's words, excepting her prophecy concerning our marriage. *That* at least I hope you are not opposed to."

Minnie gave him a blushing answer that at once reassured her lover. Nevertheless, many harassing doubts perplexed the young girl. A nameless dread of some threatening danger filled her soul. Her serious look and silent manner made Frank uncomfortable, and he tried to cheer her and sought in vain to learn what it was that troubled her. But Minnie would not reveal her secret apprehensions.

Minnie reached her room sad at heart, sadder than when she had gone home from the theatre. But as she was dressing her hair for the night, there came to her mind the air and the words of "Sweet Hour of Prayer." She softly sang the hymn and then knelt and prayed fervently that the Lord would keep her in the right way; and then she went to bed, and when slumber had closed her eyes, and her fair head lay on her beautifully-rounded arm, the tears lay on her blooming cheeks, like dew-drops sparkling on a moss rose.

CHAPTER XII.

A DIABOLICAL PLOT.—FRANK ON HIS KNEES.

"The fortune-telling scheme was a failure," said Frank to Forceps, next day in the dentist's office. "Minnie would yield neither to the tea-cup, the cards, nor the clairvoyance. By Jove! I've a good mind to marry her *sub rosa*. Would marry her to-day if I thought my mother would receive her."

"Your mother would as soon you married a girl from out the slums, as Minnie," said Dr. Forceps. "She would think the Gildersleeve family disgraced forever if you carried this country girl to her as your wife."

"Is she not good, pure, and beautiful,—a fit wife for a President of the United States?" said Frank.

"Maybe for a President of the United States, but not a fit wife for the son of one of the oldest families on Beacon Hill."

"Then I'll go no further with it. I am wearied out. 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.'"

"Pshaw! 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady,' you know. Come, don't be despondent, Frank. We will try other means. You are infatuated with the girl's beauty. I know you, my boy! You could never resolve to give her up, eh?"

"No! I love Minnie Marston," exclaimed Frank, fervently. "She must, she shall be mine!"

"Good, I see you mean business. Now listen to me."

The doctor whispered a word or two in Frank's ear.

The latter started to his feet and his face flushed hotly.

"Oh, it is villainous!" he exclaimed.

The doctor coolly knocked the ashes from his cigar, and taking another puff, said, —

"It is the only plan, and it is a sure one."

At this moment Minnie entered. She exchanged greetings with Frank, and bowed to the doctor. Forceps smiled in return, and said to the young girl, —

"I was just telling my partner, Miss Marston, about your case. I am unexpectedly summoned away, and shall have to leave him to perform the operation. Unless," he added, "you would prefer to call another day?"

But Minnie did not care to wait, and so informed the dentist.

"Very well," returned Forceps. "Frank is very skillful, and I

will, then, leave you to his charge. You have never before taken ether, I think you said the other day?"

Minnie replied No, that she had not.

"Then you have a very delightful sensation to experience," said Forceps, with his pleasant smile. He then pretended to give Frank certain directions and took his leave.

"Have no fear, Minnie," said Frank, as he prepared to administer the ether. "Remember, you are with one who loves you above everything else in the world."

"Oh! I have perfect confidence in you, dear Frank," were Minnie's last words, before she lapsed into insensibility.

When Minnie Marston awoke to consciousness, she found herself reclining in the dentist's chair, Frank standing near by, trembling, downcast. His guilty face and her own sensations led her in an instant to a realization of what had occurred during her sleep. The truth, the awful, hideous truth, broke upon her startled senses. She gave utterance to a cry that smote the young villain to the heart.

"Oh! Wretch! Wretch! What have you done?" she cried.

"Forgive me, Minnie! On my bended knees I implore your forgiveness!" pleaded Frank Gildersleeve.

But she heeded him not, and without a word, sought to rush by him and reach the door. Her intention was manifest in her horror-stricken face. But Frank intercepted her and turned the key in the lock.

"Stop, Minnie," he cried, frantically. "Curb your resentment. As God hears me, I will do you no further harm."

"No further harm!" she answered,—no further harm! Is there any further harm you *could* do me, Frank Gildersleeve? Take that knife I see lying there! Plunge it into my heart! Murder me as you have slain my honor, my innocence! If you will do that, I may forgive you!"

"Oh! Minnie! I did not mean to wrong you. I was overcome by your loveliness. Your beauty intoxicated me to madness. Oh! I knew not what I did. Say, oh! say you forgive me, Minnie! I would give my life freely to atone for this cruel deed!"

"*Your* life! As if your miserable life could wipe out the stain upon my name. As if oceans of blood could wash out the degradation you have heaped upon my soul!"

Then in a piteous tone, —

"Oh! Frank! Frank! was it for this you won my love? Was

it for this all your soft speeches and honeyed words were coined? Oh! God! Oh! God! My punishment is more than I can bear!"

"But I will repair the wrong, Minnie," said the trembling Frank. "I will do anything you say! I love you,—oh! I never loved you so much as now!"

"Dare not speak of love to me, Frank Gildersleeve. Does the mother murder her offspring out of love? Does the husband strike down the wife because of his love? Does the lover pollute and destroy that which he loves? Never! Only a brutal, heartless monster, without one single spark of human feeling in his bosom, would so misuse a poor, friendless, and unprotected girl." And overcome by her feelings, Minnie burst into tears, and sobbed aloud.

Then rising in the might of her faith, she cried,—

"Friendless, do I say? No! no! I am *not* friendless. I have God and justice on my side. There is a power that shall make you tremble! I will denounce you to the whole world. You shall feel all the terrors which you have made me suffer! I will cry my wrongs out in the very street! People will point to you as to some venomous beast. I will rouse the hue and cry of public detestation against you! You shall be driven out of society! Scouted and driven out as the lepers were of old! Stand aside, I say! Do not dare to stop me! Move away from that door! Or you shall know what it is to rouse even so weak a girl as I am to desperation!"

Frank Gildersleeve, physically brave, when moved by a worthy sentiment, trembled now like a coward and a dastard, before the girl whom he had driven to such wild frenzy.

"Minnie! dear Minnie!" he said, piteously. "Pray hear me. I knew not what I was doing. Oh! Have pity on me! Think of the disgrace, the shame you condemn me to! You do not know all! Exposure would be worse than death to me. Alas! I have deceived you. I am not a poor man; not a poor dentist, but the only son of a proud and wealthy family. Should my father know of this he would disinherit and disown me. All my prospects would be gone, all my hopes in life ruined. Oh! Minnie! Be merciful! Be merciful, and forgive me!"

The young girl passionately exclaimed:—

"Were you merciful to me? Did you think of my youth, my sex, my helplessness! Could not the sight of my powerless condition appeal to your manhood! Did no spark of human feeling plead for my innocence? Could no thought of your mother—of your sister, if you have a sister—restrain you from your wicked

purpose? Could not my trust in you — my perfect trust in your love, truth, and honor — touch your heart?"

Frank Gildersleeve shook like an aspen as she went on. Words of fire leaped to her lips. In her maddened feelings she — the delicate girl, whose tongue was a stranger to aught but the purest language, whose heart had never known anything but the softest emotions — she heaped upon him the bitterest, withering maledictions, called down the curse of heaven on his head, giving to her tones such a frightful energy and blasting intensity, that to him she seemed like an avenging angel, and filled him with a terror that caused him to quake like one in mortal dread.

"Minnie! In Heaven's name, be calm!" he cried, still on his knees, and seeking to take her hand.

"Calm!" cried the young girl, her excitement rising higher and higher and her eyes flashing wildly, "I will not be calm! Wretch! Viper! Robber of innocence! Your crime shall not go unpunished! You shall feel the weight of the law! I will not spare you! No! No! It would be a sin, a crime against heaven! The cause of truth, of innocence, of sacred justice cries out to me aloud and bids me spare you not! No! No! In prison shall you suffer! In prison expiate your foul crime!"

She stood glowering over him like an inspired prophetess, invoking the thunders of heaven on his head. The guilty man looked upon her, and seeing no hope of mercy in that hardened, flashing countenance, he cried, abjectly:—

"Oh! my God! my God! My life, my honor, reputation, — all are in your hands. God pardon my sin, since I can hope nothing from you!"

Then starting to his feet, as if seeing a vision, he cried:—

"I submit! I yield to inexorable fate! Horrors! Already the prison cell opens to my sight! The iron bars shut me out from the light of day! I hear my mother's frantic moans! My sister's — my little Gertrude's frenzied cries! Alas! Alas! I am to be the inmate of that horrible place! Chained like a wild beast! Deprived of God's bright sunshine! Bereft of every comfort! Clad in felon's garb! An outcast! A pariah! Never to look my fellows openly in the face! I, Frank Gildersleeve, son of wealth and honored name! Great heavens! Can it be! Alas! it must be! I read it in your eyes, implacable girl!" he went on, sorrowfully turning to his victim.

"But oh! Minnie! I have one request to make, — one last re-

quest! It is this: that you pray for me! Here, I humble myself at your feet. Here I ask, implore it! When next Sunday—Easter Sunday, set apart in commemoration of Him who rose from the dead!—when you enter the sanctuary, and amid the perfume of flowers and anthems of praise rising like incense to the throne of mercy and grace—as you prayerfully bow and ask mercy for your sins, think, Minnie, oh! think of him whom you have condemned to loneliness and despair, shut up within stone walls! Exiled from his kind! A prey to wasting misery and remorse! Without a friend! Without a prayer! Without a hope!”

Minnie heard this touching appeal with contending emotions. At first with disdain, then with trembling wonder, and at last with a bosom throbbing with pity. He saw this, and hope suddenly fired his drooping spirits. He clasped his hands in wild appeal, half starting to his feet.

“You are moved, your heart is not all stone!” he cried. “Oh! Minnie! Minnie! Save me! Heed the voice that is pleading at your heart. Save me! Save me! In God’s dear name, save me from a felon’s fate!”

She could not speak at once. Her voice was choked with sobs. At last, with an effort she crushed down her emotion and said faintly, and oh! so sadly,—

“Frank Gildersleeve, for your sake I would have laid down my life. You know not the depth, the sacrificing power of woman’s love! Ay! my life I would have given for your happiness. But not even for you would I sacrifice that most precious thing to woman—that which is dearer than life itself—my honor! Oh! Frank Gildersleeve! Though you have wronged me, stolen the very jewel of my soul, made me a thing of horror and contempt even to myself,—yet my heart pleads for you. I ought to despise and hate you, But God help me! I still love you! Do not then drive me out of myself! Do not put in jeopardy the love I have for you. Save yourself—save me! Redeem the evil you have wrought. Swear to me that you will remove the stain your evil passion has fixed upon me. Make me your wife,—shield me from the contempt and execration of the world, of my parents and friends; give me that which you have promised to give me time and again,—the right to hold up my head and look all mankind in the face! Make me an honest woman! Marry me. Then, and not till then, will I forgive you my wrong!”

“I *will* make you my wife, Minnie!” exclaimed Frank, deeply

moved. "God knows I would give worlds to undo what I have done. Fear not! There is no power, no dread, no earthly consideration that shall hinder me from doing you justice! If you can take such a vile wretch as I am for a husband, Minnie, — if you will not turn from me in loathing and horror at the very altar, — you shall be my wife. Here on my knees I solemnly swear it!"

"God hears your vow, Frank Gildersleeve!" said Minnie, solemnly. "On your head be the consequences as you are true or false to it. And now let me leave this place. Its very atmosphere suffocates me."

Frank offered to assist her down the stairs; but she would not suffer him to touch her; with the sense of all she had endured at his hands, so fresh upon her, she recoiled from him as she would from a serpent. The feeling would wear off, she knew. Her love had not been idly given. Her heart still beat tenderly for the man who had wronged her; but she could not forgive him all at once. Time must be given her to calm and assuage the sting and smart of her lacerated feelings. And so she told him.

They parted at the door, and Minnie, her mind in a whirl, and sick and almost fainting, slowly pursued her way homeward alone.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GILDERSLEEVES AT HOME. — DINING AND WINING ON BEACON HILL.

"This way, Father Titus; this way," said Mr. Augustus Gildersleeve, ushering into his dining-room a short, stout man dressed in the clerical habit of a Roman Catholic priest.

Around the dining-table were seated a party of gentlemen.

Augustus Gildersleeve was entertaining a few select friends, — three celebrated divines.

They were of the liberal faith, and loved and admired Mr. Gildersleeve if for nothing more than for his famous wines and still more famous dinners.

First was the Reverend Erasmus Poindexter, a transcendentalist. Next to him was seated the Rev. Hilary Cecil, an easy-going preacher of the easy-going school. The third was the Rev. Gideon

Onslaught, once a zealous Orthodox revivalist, now the most noted, the most rabid of Orthodox assailants.

Mr. Gildersleeve boasted that his house was Liberty Hall: in other words, he was ostentatiously hospitable.

These members of the church militant frequently met here to partake of his hospitality. Mr. Gildersleeve was fond of theologians. He liked to have them discuss polemics,—mooted points of doctrine and faith. It amused him.

"Walk right in, Father Titus," continued Mr. Gildersleeve. "You are acquainted with my clerical friends, I believe."

The priest bowed and shook hands with the reverend gentlemen. His sleek, unctuous countenance lighted up with a pleasant and agreeable smile. His eye, black and piercing, had at times a certain sly look that might mean simply good-humor or craftiness.

He was soft and glib of speech, with a persuasive air that almost of itself carried conviction to what he uttered.

Father Titus was on exceedingly friendly terms with the Gildersleeve family. Little, however, did Gertrude's parents imagine the real objects which drew Father Titus so frequently to the Beacon Hill mansion.

Gertrude herself might have enlightened them had she chosen to do so.

Momentous was to be the consequence of her reticence!

Oh! If she could only have had a glimpse into the future!

Oh! If she could only have read Father Titus's secret heart.

"Happy to meet you, gentlemen," said Father Titus, seating himself at the table.

The cloth had been removed with the remains of the dinner. Rich cut-glass decanters, containing wines of various kinds, now glistened on the bright mahogany.

The only attendant present was Sambo, who stood behind his master's chair.

His chief functions consisted in passing the liquors, or knocking off the heads of champagne bottles.

"You should have happened in earlier, Father," said Mr. Cecil.

"Yes, with you our dinner-party would have been complete," said Mr. Poindexter.

The priest waved his hand with a graceful gesture.

"Ah! gentlemen, I am unhappily undergoing a penance to-day, which obliges me to dispense with food for twenty-four hours," he said, with a serio-comic expression, which elicited a general laugh.

"But your prohibition does not extend to drink?" said Mr. Onslaught.

"Happily, no," said the priest.

"What will you have, then, Father Titus?" said Mr. Gildersleeve. "Claret, port, champagne? Or there is some particularly fine old otard at your elbow."

Sambo, ever on the alert, had started to pass either decanter, but the priest settled the matter by taking the brandy.

He poured out a liberal quantity, and raising his glass, said politely:—

"My regards, gentlemen. May your shadows never be less."

Toasts to each other now rapidly followed, Father Titus having set the ball once in motion.

All dignity was soon forgotten. Hilarity became the order of the day.

Those men, claiming to represent the culture and refinement of Boston, drank until all sense of propriety was lost.

Discussion, song, and story succeeded.

Father Titus alone retained the full possession of his faculties. Seeming to drink each toast offered, he adroitly concealed the fact that his glass was empty as he raised it to his lips.

No one observed this manœuvre but the watchful Sambo.

The priest accordingly rose in the negro's estimation.

Sambo, however, did not know what a severe effort was required on Father Titus's part to withstand the temptation to indulge.

The priest was of the flesh, fleshly.

He loved wine, but not in the apostolic sense.

In the security of his own parsonage, and surrounded by his own cronies, he dared to give loose rein to his propensity.

But he was too cautious to lose his mental balance in the presence of such a company as this.

Besides, he had duties yet to perform, and a project of great moment to further, and these demanded a clearer brain.

"I perceive, Mr. Gildersleeve," said the ponderous Poindexter, talking rather thick, "that we are pretty well represented here in a denominational sense."

"Ah, yes," said the host. "I think I comprehend what you mean, brother Poindexter."

It is altogether too problematical a question to decide whether Mr. Gildersleeve *did* comprehend or not. He was hardly in a condition, physically or mentally, to see anything very clearly.

"Yes," continued Poindexter. "Here we have three of the leading sects,—the Liberal, the Catholic, and—and—and—"

"Come, now, friend Poindexter," interposed Mr. Onslaught, "you are getting a stage beyond me. You not only *see double*, but *thribble*! Take another glass of this excellent Madeira, and then tell me where is your *third* representative?"

"Probably our friend refers to Sambo yonder," said the mild Mr. Cecil. "Did not our good host tell us that Sambo was a preacher of the Orthodox persuasion before he escaped from slavery at the South?"

"Thank you, brother Cecil," said Poindexter. "Yes, Orthodox—that was the term I was in search of. Sambo,"—turning to the colored man, and bending a severe glance on him,— "are you not a preacher?"

"Don't know nuffin' 'bout preachin' Marsa," answered Sambo in some trepidation. "Used ter talk ter de colored folks in de camp-meetin' sometimes down yar "

And Sambo pointed to the floor, meaning thereby to indicate the Southern point of the compass.

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Poindexter, still more severely. "Do you mean to say you have preached down *there*?" And the divine repeated Sambo's gesture, impressively. "I was not aware that preaching was allowed '*down there*.' I have been given to understand that the potentate who is popularly supposed to govern those regions is decidedly averse to preaching of that kind." A burst of laughter followed this *equivogue*.

"'Clare ter gracious, Mars' Ponduckster," said the bewildered Sambo, "I'se dun no what yer mean. It's de Gospel troof dat I has talked 'ligion at de camp-meetin's doun Souf."

"*Down South*? Oh!" said Mr. Poindexter, at which they all laughed again. "Well, that fact being established, Sambo, are you an Orthodox?"

"Yah! yah! Marsa! Coorse I'm a Norfidox," said Sambo, showing all his ivory.

"Well, and why are you an Orthodox in belief, Sambo?" pursued Mr. Poindexter, pouring out a glass of wine and slowly sipping it.

"Wal, I dunno 'zackly, Marsa!" returned Sambo, who began to comprehend that they were quizzing him. "Yer see I was a slave way down in Ole Virginny. All de slabes go Norf toward de Norf star. All de ship for de Norf dey go Norf—cause why? 'Cause

dar be de Norf star, ob coorse. Dat star be de star ob Freedom. An' now all de Freedmen, dey be goin' Norf too—gwine from Missip, from Norf C'liny an' Ole Kentuck. An' de ship dey come Norf, too. 'Cause why? 'Cause dere be light up dar. 'Cause de Norf has de best docks. De safes' docks for de runaway slabe used ter be de Norf docks. So, when I leebe Norfo'k I get board de ship dat steer for de Norf docks. And darfore, dat I guess be de reason why I's a Norfodocks."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"I think after that very lucid exposition," said Onslaught, dryly, "we had better steer clear of all docks—even the Docks—ology!"

The laughter was long and hearty at this theological pun.

"Let us hear one of your Southern sermons, Sambo," said Mr. Poindexter.

"Ay, an echo from the old plantation," said Rev. Mr. Onslaught.

"Or a political speech," said Mr. Cecil.

"Perhaps he might give us his opinion of the subject you gentlemen have been discussing," said Father Titus, "namely, the substitution of science for religion."

"Let him choose his own subject," said Mr. Gildersleeve.

Sambo protested that he could not make an impromptu speech, and begged to be excused.

"You ought, at least, to defend your own opinions," said Mr. Onslaught; "you have heard us tear Orthodoxy to pieces."

"Yes, I hearn you *try* to do dat, sah."

"Oh, we did it," remarked Mr. Cecil. "Come, now, don't you believe after what you have heard, that science is God, after all?"

The negro shook his head.

"I'se only a po' servant heah," he said; "an' twouldn't do fo' me to speak to gentlemen."

"Speak out, man," cried Mr. Gildersleeve, slapping the negro on the back; "speak your mind freely. Let's hear you."

"Don't be afraid," said Mr. Poindexter, with a wink to his brethren; "criticise us freely, and when you are through with us take up Father Titus." And Mr. Poindexter winked to that gentleman, who replied by drinking Mr. Poindexter's health.

"I can't make no speech," said Sambo, turning his honest face upon the convivial party, who, settling themselves back in their chairs, prepared to enjoy themselves at the poor ignorant fellow's expense: "I hain't got no larnin', an' dat am de troof. I don't know nuffin' 'bout your trans—trans-continentalism, or cool mules

(*molecules*) or your — your porous plasters (*protoplasts*) or your ver-mifuges (*vertebrates*). But I knows de Bible," Sambo continued, warming up. "Dat's what's de matter, an' you kin stick a pin dar, bredren. If I am sick an' in trouble, what kin yer science do fur me? If I's in poverty, will yer science see me froo de swamp? No! no! bredren! If I lose my wife an' little chil'ren, will science bring us togedder agi'n? Will it gib de bressed hope dat's like de anchor to de soul?"

"Good! Good! Hear! Hear!"

Sambo had now got on firm ground. His enthusiasm was thoroughly aroused. He went on:—

"Wha' did yer science do fo' my people afore de war? Did it help 'em ter b'ar de burdens? Did it gib 'em strength ter b'ar de lash? Did it gib 'em consolation in de dark hours? Did science stan' by dere side when dey war ready ter drop workin' in de cotton-fields an' de canebrake? When de saint die somebody stan' by him side. Dat's de bressed Lor' Jesus. What'll you do, bredren, when you hab no bressed Jesus by you side? Heh? Will yer science help yer to cross de dark ribber ob death? No, sah! No, no, bredren! Yer knows better!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"That hits you, Onslaught!" said Poindexter.

"And you also, brother Poindexter," retorted Onslaught.

"Father Titus seems to be a favorite with our colored friend," laughed Mr. Cecil.

"Go for Father Titus, Sambo! Slay and spare not!" said Mr. Gildersleeve.

"Yes. No partiality — no partiality!" said Onslaught.

Thus encouraged, Sambo continued:—

"Here's de science dat I beliebe in," — drawing a Bible from his pocket. "Here am de science fo' trouble an' distress. Ah! In dar is de science dat will bring de angels round yer bed, when de world am a growin' dark."

Then turning to the priest:—

"An' you, Fader Titus, yer wants dis Book taken out ob de public schools, — out ob de Boston schools, an' de Freedman schools. An' not on'y dat, but yer want ter break up de schools — *all* de schools. Take all de larnin' out ob de land. Stop all de people from t'inking fer demselves. Make 'em all ignorant as dey am in de Cat'olic countries, whar' not one in four know how ter read at all. Yer make yer people pray ter de Virgin an' de saints. Yer give 'em beads an' charms for de bread ob Life."

"Ha! ha! ha! How's that, Father Titus?"

Sambo went on after the laughter had ceased:—

"How can de Virgin Mary hear all dat pray to her at once? When she'm alive, she couldn't hear mo' dan forty rods off. An' how kin she hear now when she am dead dese eighteen hund'd year? Jus' tole me dat, Fader Titus! How kin she hear folks in Australia, an' Africa, an' Europe, an' America, all aprayin' to her at de same time? Yer's got de wrong science, Fader Titus; yer's got de wrong science, too, an' no mistake."

"Good! Hit him again!" cried Onslaught.

"An' more dan dat, yer let de poor honest man stay in purgatory, an' for a few dollars yer pray de rich rumseller out. Dat's de wrong science, I tell yer, whar de man dat owns fo' or five liquor saloons has de bes' seat in de church, an' de po' man sits down by de do' or kneels on de steps outside. Yer can't deny dat, 'cause it's de troof. Money buys de bes' places in yer cat'edrals, an' de best places in hebben; an' de rumseller an' de gambler who hab plenty ob money ter spend, is de big man ob de crowd. Stick a pin dar, bredren! Nuffin is too good fer him, an' when he dies, yer pray him out ob purgatory quicker'n a dog could tree a coon. While de poor man is roasted an' tortered jus' for want ob a dollar!"

"Don't let up, Sambo! Go for the padre! He can stand it!"

"An' more dan dat, yer people may drink an' fight as dey please, an' when dey goes to de confession, yer gibbs 'em a few prayers ter say, an' so many beads ter count, an' dey am 'solved till de nex' time—all forgibben an' blotted out ob de recordin' angel's book. One side am de Trans-trans-continentalists, dat beliebe dat de on'y God am in de mollusks an' de clams an de lobsters. De oder side, de Cat'olics, dey drink, dey swear, dey gamble, an' beliebes anyt'ing de priest tells 'um, an' goes ter hebben—ef dey on'y pays enough!"

"A palpable hit, Father Titus! No dodging that! Go on, Sambo. Your head's level!"

"I'm mos' froo, gem'men. If 't was n't fo' what little Norfodoxy dar am lef' in Boston, den Boston 'ud be wusser dan Sodom an' Gomorrah. Ah! gemmens, de saints dat yer all preach about, dey mortify de deeds ob de flesh. Now, how yer mortify de flesh when yer smokes an' drinks an' dribes de fas' hosses, an' do odder t'ings too numerous ter mention. Ah! Massars! Yer'll all hev ter give an account ob yer wicked deeds. Yer'll hev ter tell de Lor' how yer let de wolf inter de fold, an' let him eat up de tender sheep. Guess yer won't feel mighty peart when ole Satan says, 'Dem's

mine! Dem men's been doin' my work, an' libin' on my money.' An' de King in his glory will say, 'Depart! depart ye unfaithful shepherds. I nebber knew ye! I don't want nuffin ter do wif yer.' Den dar'll be a howlin' an' a wailin' an' a gnashin' ob teef, an' den ye'll be a screamin' for de mountings to fall on yer an' hide ye from de face ob de Lor'."

In that speech Sambo showed himself a brave man. Bold, daring as a lion at bay, standing like a rock, in God-given defiance against Boston's intemperance and infidelity. Pitting his own simple faith against the culture of Harvard College, until he compelled respect.

The assembled guests made a pretence of laughing at this assault; but at the same moment Father Titus cried out in electric tones:—

"What ails our host? See to Mr. Gildersleeve!"

Mr Gildersleeve had been strangely silent for some time past. Amid the general hilarity attention had been abstracted from him; but now at the priest's words his strange manner struck all the assembled guests, who with one accord sprang to his assistance. Mr. Gildersleeve made an effort to rise from his chair, but sank back helplessly.

A terrible shiver seemed to pass over his frame.

His face turned from white to red, then to purple.

His head fell back—he gasped for breath—his eyes took on a rigid, ghastly stare.

"Some water! Quick, Sambo!" cried Mr. Cecil.

Mr. Gildersleeve convulsively grasped Father Titus's hand as if for aid, then with a vain effort to speak, sank back senseless.

With habitual presence of mind Father Titus lifted the senseless form from his chair and laid it flat upon the floor.

"Good heavens! He is dead!" said Mr. Poindexter, in an awe-struck tone.

"No," said the priest, "not dead. A stroke of apoplexy," he added, in a whisper. "Go for a doctor, Sambo! Run as for your very life!"

Then the priest, skilled in disease, directed the others to chafe the extremities of the unconscious man.

"I will go and inform Mrs. Gildersleeve and her daughter," Father Titus said, and left the room.

Too late, alas! too late! When the frightened women reached the room—long before Dr. Lancet could appear—Augustus Gildersleeve had breathed his last!

CHAPTER XIV.

MINNIE'S TROUBLES.—ON THE BRIGHTON ROAD.

Let us return to Minnie Marston. To her the experiences of years had come in a few short months. The light-hearted girl fresh from the New Hampshire hills, full of high hopes and a noble purpose, ignorant of vice and unsullied by thought or deed as a saint, had been crushed almost to the earth by a cruel, monstrous wrong. A hideous page of life had been revealed to her shrinking vision. A rude and savage blow had dissipated in one moment the fairy dreams of innocent youth, and awakened her to the stern realities of existence. To its sorrow, its suffering, its sin, and its shame. Only God and her own heart knew the torturing, agonizing wretchedness which was now her daily and nightly portion. It seemed at times as if she must go mad with the secret weight of her wrongs, unshared by a sympathizing breast.

"Oh, mother, dearest mother," she would inwardly cry. "If I could lay my head upon your bosom and whisper in your ear the story of my grief, *you* would give me comfort; *you* would calm and soothe my troubled soul! Oh! How I remember, now, the countless times when I have flown to you, dear mother, with my childish sorrows, how you would hush me in your arms and kiss my tears away, and I would fall asleep clasped closely to your loving breast. Oh! heavenly Father! Help me to bear this terrible cross! Sustain me in this bitter, bitter trial, or my heart will burst!"

But to no living soul did the poor girl think of breathing a word of that which oppressed her. She had promised the graceless scoundrel who had compassed her ruin, never to betray him. Despite the misery he had inflicted on her, she loved him with the purest, the strongest devotion of a woman's nature. Her love constantly pleaded for him, blinding reason and judgment to the enormity of his crime and the glaring faults of his character. She had pardoned and forgiven him out of the very abundance of that love, and nothing would have induced her to violate the pledge she had given him.

Would Frank Gildersleeve be as true to his word? Would he retrieve or repair the grievous wrong he had done her and make her his wife? She could not, dared not question his truth and fidelity. To have done so, poor Minnie felt would be to drive her to madness. The very thought was desperation, and she would not entertain it for a moment.

Two months had gone by and still Frank Gildersleeve evaded his promise. Whenever the subject was mooted he had put her off with various ingenious reasons and excuses, in which she was forced to acquiesce.

"Do not feel any anxiety, dear Minnie," he would say, coaxingly. "You know I love you above everything else in the world. The happiest moment of my life will be when I can call you my own dear, little wife, and that shall be very soon. I am making every effort to hasten the day, you may rest assured, my dearest."

But Minnie grew pale and thin under this hope deferred. Frank frequently surprised her in tears.

The gay and happy spirits which had never been darkened by a care entirely forsook her. Her sweet blue eyes grew dim with secret weeping, and her countenance wore an expression of plaintive melancholy inexpressibly sad and touching. Her step grew slow and languid, and there came many a day when she was compelled to ask the indulgence of her employers to excuse her from attendance at the store.

"What in the name of common sense ails you, Minnie?" Maggie Watson asked her one day. "I declare, I don't believe city air agrees with you, dear. You are pining for green fields and daisies and buttercups, and all that sort of thing you country girls make so much of. Of course you haven't gone and fallen in love with that young swell, Frank Gildersleeve! Why, how you blush! There dear, I didn't mean to touch you up so! I declare I do believe it's more serious than a flirtation after all! And I'll just give that young jackanapes a broad hint the next time I see him. If he means business and wants to marry you, it's all right. If he's only flirting and fooling you, I'll give him a piece of my mind that'll send him about his business in short order, *that* I will!"

Minnie grasped the arm of her impulsive and voluble, but well-meaning friend, her face turning deadly white.

"Oh! Maggie," she cried, "if you love me, promise that you will never mention such a thing to Mr. Gildersleeve! I beg, I implore you not to do so! You are mistaken, utterly mistaken."

"I don't know about that," said Maggie, dubiously to herself; but she gave the required promise.

It was early on that same afternoon that Frank Gildersleeve called at Minnie's boarding-house. She came down into the parlor, a flush of pleasure lighting up her sweet, sad face as she beheld him; for Frank had been somewhat remiss in his attentions of late. His heart smote him as he noted her sad, reproachful look.

"I have been so busy lately, dearest," he said, apologetically, "that I have had hardly a moment to myself. But run and put on your things, Minnie. A friend of mine has loaned me a splendid team for the afternoon. A drive this bright September day will do you a world of good. You are getting dumpish at that confounded store! I wish you would listen to me, dearest. Give up the store and rely entirely on me to supply your needs."

"Frank," said the young girl with quiet firmness, "when you are ready to redeem your promise and marry me, as you have sworn to do, then and not till then will I look to you for my support. Until that time I shall continue to rely solely on my own resources, unless—"

"Unless what?" demanded the young man as her voice faltered and broke.

"Unless Heaven hears my prayers and takes me from this wicked world! Oh! Frank!" she added with an uncontrollable burst of anguish, "I cannot, cannot bear this awful load of misery. I cannot live as I have lived for two months past! My heart is surely breaking."

"There—there, my darling," said her lover, visibly disturbed, and dreading that she might be overheard by some of the inmates of the house. "Go get your things and we'll have a good spin out on the road that will brace you up and drive away this fit of blues."

Since his father's death, Frank Gildersleeve, with a greater command of money than during the former's lifetime, had launched freely out upon the turbid sea of dissipation. He had taken lately to horseflesh, and the pair of handsome thoroughbreds attached to the light road-wagon standing before the door was his latest purchase in that line.

It was a racing-day, and the young rake's vanity had induced him to show off his stylish turnout and the prettiest girl in Boston—as he very justly termed Minnie—on the Beacon Park Road, which he knew would be lined with the equipages of the "fast and fancy" of Boston.

"Why are there so many vehicles out to-day, Frank?" Minnie asked as they dashed along, giving the dust to many a fast trotter. "And why does everybody stare so at us?"

Frank replied to her last question with a smile at her ingenuousness:—

"Why, they are looking at you, my dear."

"At *me*!"

"Certainly! Your cheeks are ruddy as a rose. Your eyes sparkle with something of their old-time lustre, and altogether, my love, you look just as pretty as a picture."

The blush on the young girl's cheek deepened at this praise from her lover. It was indeed as Frank had asserted. All eyes were attracted to the lovely girl. And even Frank's magnificent bays elicited less remark than the bright eyes and charming countenance of his youthful companion.

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed Harry Waters, who, in company with a flashily-dressed young woman, had seen Frank's team with its occupants fly by his own. "Wonder where the deuce Frank picked up that pretty piece of femininity! By Jove! A little beauty, Meg, isn't she though? So Frank wouldn't turn his head, though of course he saw us! Aha! my boy; you want to keep shady, not recognize old friends for fear perhaps your little Puritan might ask annoying questions. All right! I'm not the boy to spoil sport. There's nothing sneaking about me! Eh, Meg?"

Meanwhile Frank and Minnie drew near the gates of Beacon Park, through which a long string of carriages were filing, while throngs of people of both sexes were hurrying along on foot.

"Confess now, my dear, that you feel already like a new being. Is it not so, dear?" said Frank.

Minnie could not but acknowledge the truth of what he had said. The excitement had, indeed, lent her a temporary strength and imparted a glow to her whole frame. Her mind, too, was, for the time being, more at ease than it had been for many a long day.

"What is this place, Frank? Surely you are not going in here?"

Minnie had clutched his arm in her surprise as Frank turned the heads of his horses toward the gate.

"Did you never hear of an exhibition of horse-speed, my pet?"

"What! You mean a horse-race!" ejaculated Minnie.

"Well, yes, if you choose to call it so. Come, now, dear, I want to treat you to a new and delightful experience, Minnie. You do not object, surely?"

"But — a horse-race!" said Minnie "Oh! I could not go, Frank."

"Why, you do not think I would take you to a disreputable place, Minnie?"

"But Frank, I've always thought respectable people did not go to horse-races."

"Respectable people! Look about you, my love!" They had by this time passed through the gates. "Why, here are the most respectable of Boston's society, the *creme de la creme*, the very bluest of Boston blue-blood. And that, you know, is a shade of perfection no other social grade in the United States can ever hope to attain. And," he added, mockingly, to himself, "I ought to know, since I have the honor of belonging to the sacred caste myself."

"But they bet and gamble at horse races?" pursued Minnie.

"Not in Boston, my dear, under the new dispensation," said Frank, ironically. "No gambling of any kind is allowed in the city of the Puritans. You do not read the newspapers, or you would not be so lamentably ignorant on such points. Why, the chief commissioner of the Boston police is at the head of this innocent little diversion which you vulgarly and alarmingly term a *horse-race*. The days of horse-racing, *as* such, are over in Boston — over forever! Here, my dear, read this advertisement."

Frank took a newspaper from his pocket, and indicating a four or five square advertisement, handed it to Minnie. She read, in large capitals, the announcement that the Boston Driving and Athletic Association offered a series of "entertainments and exhibitions of horse-speed," at which, it was conspicuously and emphatically stated, no betting or gambling of any kind would be tolerated or allowed.

"Is it not perfectly harmless, Minnie?" asked Frank, returning the newspaper to his pocket.

"Indeed, Frank, I do not see how any exception can be taken to a mere exhibition of this description. It seems very similar to the exhibitions at our agricultural fairs up in New Hampshire."

"Precisely, Minnie. And now I will drive down to the Grand Stand and secure seats, and then put the team up in the stables."

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE GRAND STAND. — JERKS AND SLIPPERS ON TROTTING PARKS.

The Grand Stand, as Frank and Minnie took their seats, presented a scene gorgeous with color, and animated by bright eyes, laughing lips, the flutter of gay ribbons and silken tresses wantonly playing in the breeze. A band stationed in one end of the Grand Stand discoursed soul-thrilling music. The champing of bits, the tread of many feet, and the confused din and murmur of the large and surging crowd, lent an excitement to the scene that stirred the senses and quickened the heart-beats of every beholder.

It was a scene and a sensation never to be forgotten by one experiencing it for the first time. And Minnie Marston, for once in long and weary weeks, threw off the secret cares and anxieties that were gnawing at her heart-strings, to revel in the novel and constantly shifting changes of the brilliant and bewildering spectacle.

It was the most exciting race of the season. The largest attendance. An "eminently respectable" gathering, containing the *elite* of Boston society. The Grand Stand was filled with ladies, laughing and discussing the merits of the contending steeds. Old men, young boys, the country bumpkin, with "his sisters and his cousins and his aunts." The smart clerk, jauntily dressed, cigar in mouth and score-book in hand. All with strained nerves, sparkling eyes, and eager faces.

Now the excitement of the day reaches its culminating point. There is a perfect Babel of sounds and cries as the starter's bell rings. The ladies clap their hands and cry:—

"Oh! Isn't it just lovely? What a splendid sight! What beautiful horses! Oh! Give me a horse-race before anything else in the world. It's too awfully jolly for anything!"

The racing begins.

"Go!" shouts the starter.

And the horses are off like the wind.

"Hi! Yi! There they go! Alley's ahead! Go it, Emmons! Bully for the brown mare! Now she's going it! Now for the home-stretch. Hi! Yi! hip! hip! hurrah!"

Fast and furious grows the tumult.

"Two to one on Foxie!" "Here you are!" "Fifteen to ten on the chestnut!" "That's my bet!" "A hundred to twenty-five on the stallion!" "I take the odds!" "Five hundred to three on the brown mare!" "Done for a thousand!"

Such were the Bedlam shouts, such the mad mania of the horse-race.

"What are those men doing down there?" asked Minnie of Frank, pointing to several groups of men huddled together in the space in front of the Grand Stand. They were waving their arms, and shouting and yelling like maniacs.

"Oh! They are merely excited, that's all," said Frank, nonchalantly. "But will you excuse me for a moment, Minnie, while I go down and get a cigar? You are perfectly safe here, surrounded by all these ladies. You will not be nervous if I leave you, only for a few minutes?"

Minnie did not like to express her real distaste for being deserted even for a moment in such a strange place. So she merely said:—

"Do not be long, please." And Frank, who had been anxious for some time for an excuse to go below, departed.

He had seen Dr. Forceps, Harry Waters, and several of his acquaintance in the excited throng, and was burning to join them.

"Hallo, Frank, old fellow!" said Harry Waters, as the former elbowed his way toward him. "Are you making up a book on the race?"

"Not yet; but I've been on tenter-hooks this half-hour to get down among you."

"Oh, yes, I understand," replied Waters, with a knowing wink up toward the Grand Stand. "Say, my boy, who is the little beauty? I've been trying to pump your friend the doctor here, but he's as mum as an oyster; won't cackle no more'n a dumb rooster. Says he don't know her."

"And that's true enough, answered Frank, with a side glance at Forceps.

"All right, my boy," said Waters, indifferently. "A hint is as good as a kick to a blind horse. I'm neither meddler nor marplot, and don't want to know any more than you wish to tell me. But here comes the nags. See them pull for the last quarter! Hi! Yi!"

Could Minnie Marston have seen from her somewhat remote situation exactly what was taking place among those excited crowds on the ground in front of the Grand Stand, she would have comprehended what a hollow and ridiculous farce that high-toned and moral announcement was which she had read in the advertisement of the races.

No betting! No gambling, forsooth!

As if there was ever a horse-race or a boat-race, or any public trial of speed or endurance, on the result of which money was not staked!

True, there was no visible *pool-selling* on the grounds. But thousands and tens of thousands of dollars were openly put up on every race and heat trotted that day; put up in the hands of volunteer stakeholders, who undoubtedly claimed and were allowed their regular commissions on each and every event that transpired.

And all the while, Boston policemen standing by, sworn and paid to enforce the law, themselves interested and even excited witnesses of its flagrant and barefaced violation!

The crowd flocking around the bar where liquors were sold was enormous. Eight attendants had all they could do to supply the demand. Among the heaviest drinkers was Frank Gildersleeve. Coming out into the open air after a deep potation, he stumbled across Jonathan Jerks.

"Hallo, Jerks, how are you?" said Frank, greeting Jonathan cordially. "What are you doing out here, eh? Going to turn your crank of reform on to horse-racing?"

"Wal, should n't wonder ef I did," returned Jonathan, jerking his head and twitching his eyes in his usual manner. "Guess this 'ere trotting park needs a leetle crank business, eh?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Frank, gayly, "I think you'll have to turn the crank a long while before you could stop this most respectable 'moral exhibition.'"

"What!" cried Frank, suddenly recognizing some one approaching. "Why, I declare if there isn't our old friend, the superb and incomparable 'Eye-glass Slippers'!"

"Hullo! Great Scott! ef that ain't Slippers arter all!" exclaimed Jonathan, stopping short and gazing at the exquisite with suppressed amazement. "Wal! wal! What in the dickens has brought him back ter this tarnation country? Gosh! perhaps he's a-goin' ter show our 'dood thoithiety' what's what!"

Jerks, with a twist of the head and roll of the eyes, chuckled and sauntered up to Slippers.

"Hullo, old fel, how are ye? How de du?" saluted Jonathan, grasping the fashionable snob by the hand, and almost wringing it off in his brawny palm. "Great geewhiliky! my boy, when did you git back? Wa'n't you rayther 'fraid ter come, now? Earth might tip up ef you stirred round much, eh?"

"Ah-h!" murmured Slippers, withdrawing his hand from Jerk's grasp, a look of agony on his face. "Oh — ah! how do, Mr. — a Mr. Jerkth? Aw! I — I am werwy glad to thee you."

He looked, indeed, very glad. About as glad as if he had met a wild alligator with open jaw and no way of escape before him.

"Great gosh! So you got back, eh!" cried Jonathan, slapping the embarrassed Slippers gayly on the back. "Thought you'd fetch over a leetle 'dood thothiety' with you, eh? Wal, that's right. Ef you can save the country, do it, by hokey! ef you have ter bust off every button you've got!"

"Aw! Mr. Jerkth," simpered Slippers, arranging the bouquet in the lapel of his coat. "Aw! what — er — do you think of this *beau-tiful*, *magnifique* horth-rathe?"

"Think of it," cried Jonathan, scornfully; "why, I think it's a pesky humbug. The biggest fraud I ever sot eyes onter. Why, I thought this 'ere race was a-goin' ter be a high-toned, moral, hifalutin' horse-race an' no mistake. Why, great Joshua Pease! ef I didn't think it was ter be a'most a camp-meetin', a revival of all that was good an' lovely. Jes' look at the papers, they puffed it sky high. Moral? Why, moral wan't no name for it. Accordin' ter their reckonin' 'twas a dozen times better'n a prayer-meetin' an' a million times sweeter for the soul than a hul cart-load of tracts an' a shovel-ful of mottoes thrown in."

"Aw! but thith rathe ith patronithed by the betht thothiety," said Slippers, with a genteel wave of the hand.

"Of course 'tis," returned Jonathan, winking at Frank, who was an amused spectator. "Why, ain't *you* here? An' I rayther reckon' you're about as chock full of respectability as they make 'em. Yes, by hokey! I believe you, my boy. It's the all-firedest crowd of gentility I ever set eyes onter. — 'Oh! ma, there ain't no gamblin' a'goin' on at Beacon Park. Can't I go, ma?' says the young sprigs. 'The papers say "No betting allowed."' An' the mammas, who rally believe the newspapers are like G. Washington, Esq., an never tell a whopper, swallow the boshwash about 'no gamblin' as simple as a spring chicken. 'Michael, order out the carriage. We are goin' ter a highly moral horse exhibition,' they say. An out trots the carriage, an' the high-toned boys an' gals come out here, expectin' ter see a'most a revival of religion — somethin' awful good an' grand. I swan! the idea of seein' a moral horse-race! Why, I never heerd of sech a thing afore. Great jiminy! You might as well say a horse-race without any swearing, any drinkin'; I swow ef you mightn't!"

"Aw! but private betting between gentlemen," interposed Slippers. "Aw! that ith different from vulgar pool-thelling, you know."

"About as much difference, my boy, as there is between twelve and a dozen," blurted out Jerks. "Sounds different, but the meaning aint more'n a mile an' a half from each other, I take it. No sir-ree bob! I tell you, bettin' is bettin', no matter how it's done or who does it. Why, tarnation gee-whiliky! ef I hain't seen \$30,000 change hands on that 'ere fust race, then I didn't see a cent, that's all. Gamblin'! Why, 'tain't no name for it. Why, I rally believe half the blacklegs in the country are here a gamblin' like all creation! Don't s'pose they come way from New York, Kentucky, an' Tennessee jes' ter see horscs trot, du ye? Wal, I guess not. Why, I swan ter gracious! ef the manager of the hul thing ain't a reg'lar professional gambler himself. Runs two of the biggest gamblin' dens in Boston."

"Aw! He — ith a gentleman," said Slippers, adjusting his eyeglass and looking admiringly at the ladies in the Grand Stand. "He — aw thandth werwy well in dood thotheity."

"Does, eh," said Jerks, shaking his head. "Wal, all I got ter say is, I pity 'dood thotheity.' Boston's got down mighty low, I can tell ye, when reg'lar gamblers get ter runnin' a place like this. Bosom friend of the president of this 'ere association, I hear, too. An' *he's* the head commissioner of Boston's police. Great Joshua! No wonder the policemen stand around like statoos, a-doin' nothin' but stare an blink, as ef they could n't see the gamblin' goin' on right under their very nose. I swan! Shouldn't wonder ef their eyes was plastered by leetle bits of paper with a green back. It's a tarnation shame the way they let this barefaced gamblin' go on. An all-fired sham, I swan ter goodness ef 't ain't."

"Oh! dood thotheity allowth betting," put in Slippers, in a supercilious tone. "There ith nothing dithgrathful about that. The higheth gentlemen — the real 'blue-blood' awithtoctrithy permit — ah — playing for money."

"Wal, sir, I jes' tell you what," said Jonathan, warmly, "their old dads wouldn't. You can bet on that, sure as fate. The old Puritans would kick ag'in it like all creation. Great gosh! more I see about 'dood thotheity,' the more I'm struck whack with the fact that it means 'bad society,' I swan ef it don't."

And Jonathan, winking in a mysterious way at Slippers, put his hands in his pocket, and nodding to Frank, sauntered away.

All this while Minnie was in the Grand Stand, waiting Frank's return.

"Where can he have gone?" she said, anxiously, as an hour passed and he did not appear.

The poor girl was getting weary and uneasy at the noise and confusion all about her. Now that the first novelty of the scene had worn off, she felt a growing and increasing distress. The reaction from the unnatural excitement was already having its due effect. Her head ached, her limbs were full of tremors.

Suddenly Minnie became conscious that she was the object of a free and impertinent regard on the part of two or three dissolute and rakish looking men, all old enough to be her father. They had observed that she appeared to be alone; and with the blackguardism which distinguishes this class of human ghouls and vampires who of late years infest Boston's public places, one of them had seated himself in the place vacated by Frank. He even attempted to open a conversation with the now thoroughly frightened girl. Minnie turned resolutely away at the sight of his evil-looking countenance.

"Oh, come now, take it more friendly, my dear," whispered the fellow, coarsely, and moving still closer toward the shrinking girl.

Several gentlemen simultaneously sprang to Minnie's aid at that moment; but one was before them all,—a young man, scarcely more than twenty-one, whose dress bespoke him the gentleman, but whose flushed face and reeking breath denoted that he was strongly under the influence of liquor.

Sobereid partially by what he had just witnessed, the young man leaped down the aisle. In an instant he was confronting the miscreant. In another, his arm was drawn back, then shot out with the force of a catapult, and Minnie's persecutor went headlong down upon the rough floor. Shout after shout went up from the men and even ladies who had witnessed the scene.

Minnie impetuously flung herself into the arms of her protector, clinging to him and sobbing upon his breast, while she murmured:—

"Oh! Frank! Frank! Take me away from here! Take me away from this terrible place!"

Frank Gildersleeve—for it was he—hastened to soothe the terrified girl, and followed by three or four gentlemen, who had placed themselves between him and the infuriated ruffian who had now risen to his feet and was shaking his fist in impotent rage at the young fellow, reached the door.

A police officer had by this time taken the blackguard into custody.

"Your name, sir, if you please," said the officer to Frank. "I

see how the case stands, but I shall want you as a witness against this fellow."

But Frank had good reasons for not wishing his name to appear in connection with such an affair, and a few whispered words in the officer's ear settled the matter satisfactorily.

"But I'm not done with *you*, my chicken," yelled the prisoner after Frank. "I've marked you well, my cully, and I'll get even with you yet, if I'm juggled for it!"

Paying no heed to the fellow's menace, Frank supported Minnie down the stairs. The poor girl was almost too faint and weak to stand. In a few minutes more they drove out of the Park gates, and dashed back toward the city.

"Are you ill, Minnie?" Frank cried, suddenly, as the young girl's head sank upon his shoulder.

"In mercy's name stop at the first house," she murmured. "I—I fear I shall faint! Quick, Frank, for the love of heaven!"

Fortunately a public-house was close by. Frank hastened to assist the agitated girl to alight, explaining to the landlord in a few hurried words the cause of Minnie's illness. In a moment or two Minnie was lying upon a couch in the private sitting-room, while the landlord's wife applied some simple restoratives.

"She will be all right after a little rest," said the woman to Frank. She looked curiously for a moment at the young couple, then she drew Frank aside and asked in a low tone:—

"The lady is your wife, I take it, sir?"

The young man was for an instant perplexed at the sudden question. Then, with a rapid intuition, he answered quickly: "My wife? Certainly she is my wife."

"Ah! I am glad to hear *that*," said the woman, and left the room.

"Frank," said Minnie, faintly, beckoning him to her, "do you love me as dearly and truly as you have so often told me that you did?"

"Ten thousand times more than I can ever express by words, my darling," said the young man; and at the time he spoke nothing but the truth.

"Stoop down nearer to me, dear Frank," Minnie said again, "I want to whisper something in your ear."

The young man complied, then started back pale and trembling.

"Now you will not prove false to me, Frank?" said the young girl, imploringly.

"Never, my poor girl!" he answered. "Minnie, whatever it may cost me, whatever the result may be, you shall be my lawful wedded wife within forty-eight hours. I will take you home to-night. To-morrow I will make all necessary preparations, and in the evening we will go quietly to a clergyman and be married. As I do to you," he added, solemnly, "may God do to me in the hour of my utmost need!"

Remember that oath, Frank Gildersleeve, when the hour you have prophesied shall come!

END OF VOLUME I.

BOSTON INSIDE OUT:

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

BY
REV. HENRY MORGAN.

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BOSTON INSIDE OUT.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER XVI.

LIBERALISM VS. ROMANISM. — MR. POINDEXTER AND FATHER TITUS.

The funeral of Augustus Gildersleeve was over. The event brought into close relationship those exponents of Romanism and Liberalism, Poindexter and Father Titus. When dying, Mr. Gildersleeve had bowed his head to Father Titus. The priest, from previous knowledge, understood this motion to mean that the merchant died in full acceptance of the Papal faith. This was the only sign he gave of salvation.

From that time Father Titus looked upon the Gildersleeve estate as part of his own. He was now more frequently at the mansion than ever before. True, Mrs. Gildersleeve was a Transcendentalist and a woman of strong will, but she had allowed Gertrude to attend at confessional and be taught by the Sisters of Notre Dame. Now Gertrude was an heiress. What a prize for the church! Mr. Poindexter had always been free in the family, especially to the sideboard! Prohibition was not in his creed. Both these gentlemen at the present moment were a little too free in spirit. Their tongues being oiled, they glibly revealed too many church secrets.

"Father Titus! Tell me! What is the secret of your wonderful success in America?" said Poindexter as they sat in the smoking-room of the Gildersleeve mansion.

"Well, sir! First, organization. We are the strongest organized body in the world. Obedience to the church is our first law. We obey the church through the bishop. His word is the divine fiat. When he speaks, the great army of priests execute his mandates. Millions of hearts beat as one. By the confessional, and our

secret orders, we penetrate every private chamber, convict's cell, court, conclave, and every secret conventicle. Our spies are like Elisha, who 'tellethe the words thou speakest in thy bedchamber.'

"Well, I confess," said Poindexter, "that Liberalism is deficient in organization; hence our failure."

"No, not altogether," said Titus. "You have no zeal, no ardor to hold men together. No faith. Zeal springs from faith. The Puritans were zealous — men of conviction; so are we. Our poor followers will do anything for the church; make any sacrifice; fast, pray, go to early mass exposed to storm or cold; do penance, confess, repent, and give their last cent, all for the priest and the church."

"Still your army don't increase with the increase of population."

"No, we have some drawbacks. Free schools destroy faith. Many fall away. But the school question will be soon settled. Our children will attend our own schools."

"Then ignorance is still the mother of devotion!"

"No, not exactly. Yet many of our purest saints are those that cannot read. They can say the rosary, and make the sacrifice."

"Yes!" said Poindexter. "The poor make the sacrifices, but how about the rich? How about the priests? How about fast horses, liquors, cigars, and those amiable '*Nieces*'?"

"Well, the priests are not all abstemious, I confess. But as they are sworn to celibacy, having no family privileges, they may be pardoned."

"It is astonishing to see the faith that the poor people have and how easily they are deceived by you."

"Yes. They may be deceived. They are taught that the priest can do no harm. Taught that he stands in the place of God, hears confession, pronounces absolution, and the Almighty would not allow him to do wrong. Thus we are above suspicion."

"Your church assumes to cater to all tastes, to supply every kind of spiritual needs."

"Assumes? We do it!" said Father Titus with an air of triumph, and helping himself from the Bourbon decanter.

These frequent libations were beginning to tell on the priest. His tongue was becoming loosened, much to Poindexter's satisfaction and amusement, who continued to ply him with questions.

"Yes," continued the priest, "the Catholic Church is the true Universal Church. It meets the requirements of every class. Ignorance and culture flock to our holy standard. Meet on equal ground.

We recognize no privileges of rank or condition. Look at our converts. They come from every rank in society; not only the poor, but the rich. Strange though it may seem, our ranks are rapidly filling even from men of your own creed, brother Poindexter. There is a culminating point in faith as in physics, when all beyond is chaos. Liberalism tends to that point. When reached, then the work of the Catholic Church begins. We find a man figuratively drowning, and reach out to him the saving hand. A sinking man will grasp even at a straw, you know. Witness our departed friend, whose good liquors we are now discussing. Thus you have the spectacle of a man of culture, of refinement and wealth, who has cut loose from all faith, denying religion, denying God, denying Christ, and at last in his despair ready, nay! eager to worship a wafer! Ah! Brother Poindexter," continued Father Titus facetiously, "I shall only be too happy to be at hand at the time of your need!"

And the priest laughed heartily at the conceit, while again having recourse to the decanter.

Poindexter said nothing for a moment. He felt something of the truth of the priest's remarks, but did not care to acknowledge it. He thought of his own limited congregation. It was daily growing "small by degrees and beautifully less." At length, with a feeling of envy, he said, "Your church is certainly a powerful one, Father. Even the politicians are afraid of you."

"The politicians!" cried Father Titus, disdainfully. "Of course! We hold them in the hollow of our hand: they know the value of the votes we control. Since 'Know-Nothing' days, no politician dare throw down the gauntlet to the Holy Catholic Church! You tender Protestants were shocked at your own illiberality in persecuting Catholics, almost disfranchising them. The revolution in public feeling came, brought about by your own uneasy consciences. Ha! ha! It was a grand thing for us. It is what we ever aim to effect. Proscription, persecution, martyrdom! These are our glory. From these come our strength. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, you know."

"But there was in fact *no* bloodshed"

"No, but there was plenty of loud talk about it. I saw men in those days, even here in Boston, eager to dye their hands in Catholic blood. Ah! if they had only done it! We looked for it, longed for it, prayed for it, and did everything to precipitate a massacre! Would you believe it? Some of the most rabid agitators in the 'Know-Nothing' councils were secretly our agents; at heart the most fervid Catholics."

Poindexter passed the decanter at this point. He saw the usually cautious priest was getting into a vein of braggadocio from the effects of the liquor, and was just in the mood for letting out secrets. The liberal preacher inwardly hated the priest. He was not ignorant of Father Titus's growing influence in the Gildersleeve family, and he resented what he considered an encroachment on his own particular domain.

"Speaking of politicians," said Poindexter, "you refer, of course, to the Democratic party."

"By no means. Republican officials are not exempt from our influence any more than are Republican newspapers."

"But your power is strongest among Democrats. To paraphrase Horace Greeley's famous saying,—I do not say that all Democrats are Catholics; but I do say all Catholics are Democrats. I have yet to see a single exception. Now, Father Titus, in what does your hold on the Democratic party consist?"

"In this, brother: The policy of our church in every country is to side with the minority party; to gain their gratitude by substantial help, so that when the day of prosperity arrives we may ride with them into power. In America the Democratic party best sub-serves our ends and aims,—through that party, which is strong in the great cities, our influence is felt in every department of municipal government. The bulk of our strength lies in the cities. Yes, Brother Poindexter, our church is a powerful organization. To sum up, the poor believe in us. The Democrats swear by us. Politicians are afraid of us. Convicts cling to us as to an ark of refuge. Gamblers who reverence nothing else, reverence our religion. Before the priests they take their hats off and humbly say, 'Your Reverence.' In short, wherever sin, poverty, and crime exist in large masses, there is our harvest-field, and there we reap a prolific harvest; for Holy Mother Church alone supplies the great want of nature,—shifting upon herself the burden of moral and spiritual responsibility, and taking away the fear, the dread, the very sting of death. The true test of religion is the death-bed. It is only the child of the true church whose pathway to heaven is made smooth and placid and devoid of every source of terror."

"D. L. Moody, the Revivalist, claims as much for his peculiar creed," said Poindexter. "His labors extended over the same ground as that of your church. He drew criminals, drunkards, paupers into the fold! Drew them in by thousands. He must have proved a thorn in the flesh to you Catholic priests."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Father Titus. "That is rich, indeed. Moody never gained a single convert from us, if *that* is what you mean. Why, as an inducement to the poor, he enticed them by feeding large numbers at the Tabernacle. Well, they ate his earthly bread, but couldn't stomach his spiritual sustenance. On Fridays he gave them pork and beans. The Catholic instinct was too strong. They ate the beans, but *left the pork on their plates!* No! Not even paupers can be tempted to go back on the church. They may starve, hunger may gnaw at their vitals, but they will die rather than forsake the Mother Church which has nurtured them."

"You hinted at controlling the newspapers?"

Father Titus nodded.

"That explains, then, why no scandals against the priests are ever made public?"

"Partly," said Father Titus, mysteriously.

"While a poor Protestant minister, if he makes a *faux pas*, sees his name blazoned in every print," said Poindexter.

"That is the advantage of belonging to the priesthood," said Father Titus with a wink and a leer. "We, you see, are virtually a secret body, and every priest is interested in concealing the peccadilloes of his brother priests.

"Take care, Father Titus! Take care! some day some of these scandals may leak out, and let light in upon your secret doings.

"Oh! that would be impossible," said the priest, as he rose to go, "for if any of our parishioners should fall into our trap and then expose us, why, they would be excommunicated, and then be looked upon by the congregation as lunatics."

CHAPTER XVII.

ROSE DELANEY GOES TO CHURCH. — SPIDER AND FLY.

Father Titus is seated in his confessional. On one side is Rose Delaney, dark-eyed, rosy-cheeked, sparkling in her youthful beauty. On the other an old woman, wrinkled, blear-eyed, palsy-stricken. Old Bridget pours forth her confession with enthusiasm. The priest to her is as the ear of Heaven.

"Ah! Sure," she would say on seeing the priest's eyes closed as if inattentive to her mumbled confession, — "sure an' the blissed fater is wearied wid his hard labors. But no matter! Me confession goes right straight up through him ter the Blissed Virgin."

So Bridget continued to mumble, —

"Shure I ate mate lasht Friday by mishtake, an' it's back in my church dues I am too, an' I forgot to sind little Patsey to his catechism, an' mist mass three times the week."

And Bridget went on to catalogue her many sins and misdoings for the past week into the ear of the inattentive priest.

To all of which Father Titus responded absently, giving the usual light penances, as "Say three 'Hail Marys,'" etc.

All this time Father Titus's eyes were furtively directed toward the young girl waiting her turn on the other side of the confessional. He had slyly pushed aside the slide on that side in order to see who his next penitent was to be. This was Rose Delaney, — a married woman, though scarcely more than a child in years.

Her face was new to Father Titus. And a very attractive face it was. So thought the priest, at any rate.

Rose noticed how the priest's eyes wandered toward her. Her chief foible was vanity. She was extremely pretty, and she knew it. Flattery was sweet both to her ears and to her sight. She craved attention, hence she felt flattered at receiving such particular notice from a priest, and returned his sidelong glances with demure looks that spoke a language all their own. It was not the language of invitation, however, for Rose's heart was as yet innocent of guile. Ah! The poor fly was already fluttering on the edge of the web!

"What a charming young girl! I wonder who she can be? This is certainly her first confession here. By the Holy Saints!

Her beauty would stir an anchorite's heart. Ah!—h—h! Is she a new convert? Has she been confirmed? Has she yet chosen a confessor? If not, why—”

Such were the thoughts running through Father Titus's mind, while apparently listening to old Bridget's confession.

“Bah! I must get rid of this tiresome Bridget Flannagan; she would go on from now to eternity.”

And Father Titus hurriedly cut short Bridget's catalogue of wrong doing, sputtered out a few penances, abruptly closed the slide, and as quickly pushed fully open the one before which Rose Delaney knelt.”

“*In nomine Patria et filius et spiritus sanctus.*” Father Titus rolled out the sonorous blessing with something more than his usual unction. His voice had a deeper cadence, his eye, as it fastened itself upon the blushing countenance of his fair penitent, emitted a kindlier beam.

The preliminary offices of confession over, the priest, departing from the usual custom, led the young girl on to relate something of her personal history. His curiosity in this case was not to be satisfied by ordinary inquiries. To Bridget Flannagan he had given five minutes, Rose Delaney's confession lasted nearly half an hour, and, singularly, neither found it very wearisome.

“What is your name, my daughter?”

“Rose Delaney, your reverence.”

“Ah! A sweet, pretty name indeed! And a very appropriate one, too, my dear. ‘Rose’ is highly suggestive of beauty.”

And Father Titus gave her one of his most benign glances. This was the very oil of praise to the simple girl.

“Have you recently moved into the neighborhood, my dear?”

“Yes, father.”

“Then I may hope to see you often at this church.”

“I shall not fail to come, father.”

“And you will come to confession regularly, once a week, my daughter?”

“Yes, your reverence.”

“Where do you reside?”

Rose told him the street and number.

“Are your parents members of the Catholic Church?”

“No, your reverence. I was brought up a Protestant.”

“Ah! You have been snatched, then, as a brand from the burning. Thanks be to the Holy Virgin! Perhaps you may yet be the means of rescuing your parents from endless misery.”

"My father is dead, your reverence. But my mother still lives."

"You reside with your mother, then?"

"No, father," Rose answered with a little hesitancy, "I live with my husband!"

Father Titus was intensely surprised at this. He looked at Rose as if scarcely able to credit the statement. She seemed so very young, — so much like a child!

"How long have you been married, my daughter?"

"Three years, father."

"Indeed! you were married very young, I should say, my child. Is your husband a Catholic?"

"Oh, yes, your reverence."

"Ah! Then we owe your conversion to the true faith to your love for him!"

"Assuredly, father, I love my husband very much. If I had not loved him so dearly, I could never have withstood my dear mother's prayers and pleadings against my joining my husband's church. It was a very bitter struggle, father."

"It will redound to your glory in this world and the next, dear daughter. Have you any children?"

"Two, father."

"What is your husband's business?"

"He is just now out of work, your reverence. He is confined at home by an attack of rheumatism."

"Ah! Well, a true son of the church must needs find friends who will assist him. I do not know but that I can be of help to Mr. Delaney. You may come to my house at eight o'clock this evening, and I will see if something cannot be done for your husband. Will your duties permit you to come at that hour?"

Father Titus's eyes were devouring the charms of Rose Delaney while uttering these words. His greedy gaze wandered over her graceful figure, taking in the rounded contours and swelling outlines with a satisfaction that would have frightened its object could she have read the meaning of its expression aright.

Reader, you have seen the spider lying *perdu* in the darkest corner of his web. Seen him watch the gaudy colored flies buzzing near his mesh. Now one ventures on the outer circle. Curiosity draws her nearer and nearer. Now her wings are entangled, and buzz! buzz! flutter! flutter! and for this time she escapes. The watchful spider stirs not.

"Ah!" says the silly fly, "what a beautiful palace is this! What happiness to dwell there! I must explore those pleasant walks, peep into those beautiful chambers! Ah! I could live there forever!"

Again she ventures. Her feet tread the mazy walks. Her wings flit against the silken walls. Onward she goes, unconscious of the unseen gossamer falling about her, seeing not the destroyer waiting in ambush. Suddenly she stops, frightened. Tries to retreat. Alas! it is too late. In vain the poor victim writhes and twists. There is no help. She is fast in the toils! Now the enemy shows himself. Darts like a flash upon his prey. Web after web with lightning speed is spun over the victim, until a shroud of death is around her.

Thus did Father Titus entrap the unwary Rose Delaney. Thus did he first arouse her curiosity, then allured her by pleasant anticipations, and at last led his victim on to the consummation of his dark and sinful plans.

But Rose Delaney was ignorant that the priest was actuated by any other than the worthiest motives,—motives of pure benevolence and kind-heartedness. So she answered that she would call at the parsonage at the time specified, and with this he dismissed her.

Rose Delaney hastened home with a light heart

"Oh! John!" she exclaimed to her husband, as she put her arms around his neck and kissed him. "Cheer up! I have got real good news to tell you."

"Ah! Well, what is your good news, Rosie?" said John, smiling at her happy face and joyous manner.

"Well, I have been to confession, John, to the 'Gates of Paradise' Church. The father confessor is a splendid man."

"Ah! You like him, then? What is his name, Rosie?"

"Father Titus."

"Oh! yes! I have heard of him. He has a very high standing among the clergy. I believe he is the bishop's right-hand man and is intrusted with much of his confidential business. Father Titus's reputation for zeal and sanctity is second to none in the diocese, so I have heard."

"I have no doubt of it, John. Oh! I do so long to hear him preach. I know I shall never be satisfied to go to any other church save his in the future."

"Well, we will take seats there as soon as I can get to work again, Rosie."

"That puts me in mind, John. The good father inquired all about us. One thing led to another, and he said he thought he could be of assistance to you. He invited me to call at the parsonage this evening, and he would try and arrange something for you. Too bad that your rheumatism is so bad that you can't go with me, John!"

"I am sorry, too. But you can tell Father Titus that I shall come to church just as soon as I can get out again. You must invite him to call and see us, Rosie. It was very kind in him to interest himself in a perfect stranger."

"That is so, John. I really almost fell in love with him, he is so good and kind. Don't you be jealous now, John," she added, playfully.

"Oh! I don't mind your falling in love with a priest, Rosie," said John, fondly. "That kind of love would only be a spiritual affection, compounded more of reverence than of any other sentiment. Such love we are enjoined to feel for the ministers of our Holy Church. I know that you love me, Rosie, dear, and I have no fear that you will ever give me any just cause for being jealous of you."

"I guess not!" said Rose emphatically. "You are the dearest fellow in the world, John. I should like to see the man that could make me swerve one hair's breadth from my loyalty to you. A wife with such a good husband, a mother with two such darling children as I have, would be a monster of deceit and ingratitude if she could allow her thoughts to wander for one moment from them."

Rose spoke from her heart. She believed implicitly what she then uttered. Would the time ever come when she would recall those words with bitterness and regret? Would she ever feel the maddening sting of remorse, and despairingly look back to that happy moment when the world held nothing so precious to her soul as her loved husband and idolized children?

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE JEALOUSY OF A NIECE. — ROSE'S TEMPTATION AND FALL.

During the rest of that day Father Titus' thoughts dwelt more on the coming interview with Rose Delaney than was quite consistent with the proper observance of his many duties.

The parsonage was a stately old mansion formerly belonging to one of Boston's oldest families. An old-fashioned house, but abounding in modern comforts.

Father Titus' tastes were of the luxurious order. His study, sitting-room, and bedroom were sumptuously adorned. Creature comforts were on every hand.

It was evening, and in dressing-gown and slippers Father Titus was seated before a genial fire in the open grate of his sitting-room. He presented a picture of negligent ease and what *he* would call solid comfort. At his right hand stood a table on which were some books and newspapers, together with some glasses and a decanter of wine. The latter was just now receiving much more of his attention than the former.

Reaching out at last to a hand-bell, he struck it sharply. A servant entered.

"Katy, request my niece to come here," said the priest.

The servant departed. In a moment the door again opened and a tall, handsome woman approached the priest.

"What do you want?" she demanded brusquely.

The priest turned and gave her a glance, then helped himself from the decanter, and said,—

"So! you are in one of your tantrums again, my gentle Marie?"

"I asked you what you wished to see me for?" said the woman, still coldly, her lips twitching nervously.

"First explain to me what has put you out of sorts to-day, and I will answer you, my sweet niece," said Father Titus mockingly, with the evident intention of adding to her irritation.

"Niece!" exclaimed Marie in strong disgust. "Can you not drop your hypocritical mask even when we are alone? What need of

keeping up the ridiculous farce with no one but ourselves to witness it?"

"Hush! silly girl! The very walls may have ears! But you have not answered my question. Tell me what has displeased you, my charmer?"

And Father Titus caught her hand and commenced to fondle it. The action somewhat mollified Marie.

"Come, have I done anything to vex you, Marie?" said the priest again, but in a kinder tone.

"You vex me continually, Herman," said Marie, softening.

"Well, what is the special grievance to-day?"

"I was at church this morning—"

"What! At church? I did not see you."

"No, I took care that you should not. But I saw you and all that transpired."

"Oh! You did, eh? You didn't come to confession, I take it?" sneered the priest. "That would be needless, my dear Marie, since here you may confess to me in private *ad libitum*."

Marie did not deign to reply to this sarcasm.

"I went to church for a purpose."

"Most people do!" said Father Titus dryly. So dryly in fact that he felt compelled to moisten his palate on the instant with another glass of wine.

"Well, what was your purpose in going to church, my dear?" he continued.

"To watch you, Herman Titus."

"The deuce!" said Father Titus to himself. "Marie is certainly getting jealous. Somebody has been putting a flea into her ear. It is decidedly inconvenient just at this juncture, when I am expecting the young and interesting Rose Delaney here every moment. I must get our jealous Marie away for the evening somehow."

Then to Marie he said,—

"To watch me? You are beside yourself, my dear. Or have you turned spy for our good Bishop?"

"You know what I mean," said the woman. "I have suspected you were playing fast and loose with me for some time. I saw the young and pretty girl who made such an *exceedingly* long confession to you to-day!" she added significantly. "Is *she* to be my successor here? Is *she* to play the role of *another* of your NIECES here?"

"Decidedly, I shall have to ship this jealous Marie off to a nunnery," said Father Titus *sotto voce*. Then aloud he added,—

"Marie, your remarks are in very bad taste. You are not in an amiable mood, and I am afraid I shall have to give you a penance to exorcise this bad spirit. I was thinking of spending a sociable evening with you, and so sent for you, as I expected to be alone to-night. But to my sorrow I see I must order it otherwise. So put on your things, my dear, and go and visit poor Mrs. Branagan. She is quite ill, you know. After that you can call at Tim Mullooney's, whose family are reported to be in very destitute circumstances since Tim fell from the staging of the church a month or two ago. I will make you my almoner. Here are a few dollars. I need not caution you to use care and discretion, and not be too liberal in dispensing the Lord's money. I hope you will pass a pleasant evening, my dear. What! Are you not going?"

For Marie made no offer to take the money or to stir.

"No, I am not going a step!" she exclaimed defiantly.

Father Titus arose slowly to his feet. An entire change came over his countenance. His features hardened into rigid lines. His brows drew together. His eyes flashed out sparks of angry fire. He walked close up to the now cowering Marie.

"Do you mean to disregard my wishes, woman?" he said in deep chest tones. "Will you compel me to—"

But there was no need of carrying out the threat. Marie, frightened by his menacing manner, which perhaps recalls some former harsh experience that she had no wish to have repeated, bowed her head submissively, silently took the money, and left the room.

A few minutes afterward Father Titus heard the street door close. Again he summoned the servant.

"Katy, was that Miss Marie who just went out?"

"Yis, your rivirince."

"Very well, you may go."

The priest resumed his seat, eyeing the clock anxiously. The hands had hardly indicated the hour of eight, when there was a ring at the door. A little later Katy ushered Rose Delaney into the room and discreetly departed.

"Ah! My dear, you are as punctual as the clock," said Father Titus, rising and leading Rose to a seat beside his own. "Sit down, my daughter. Why, I declare! you look as fresh as a daisy. How your eyes sparkle, my child! The cold air has painted your cheeks like the damask rose. But your little hand is as warm as I am sure is your heart!"

And good Father Titus continued to press and fondle the soft, moist hand of Rose Delaney in the most fatherly and paternal way imaginable.

Rose felt at first a little uneasy and embarrassed at the priest's familiarities, but in her vanity and simplicity she thought no harm of it.

"And how is your good husband, daughter Rose?" asked Father Titus.

"He is very well, with the exception of his rheumatism, father. He wishes me to give you his regards, and say that as soon as he is able he intends to join the 'Gates of Paradise' church."

"I am very glad to hear it, my dear," said the priest, rubbing his hands. "And that brings me to the subject about which I wished you to call upon me."

"About my husband, father?" said Rose.

"Yes, my dear. I have a situation at my church for a responsible and faithful man. The duties are light, but they will require constant attendance. Now when I have seen your husband I can decide more fully. Meanwhile you can tell me something about him, so that I may be prepared to judge. Of course, now, for instance, you live happily together?"

The priest eyed the girl keenly, while not seeming to do so.

"Oh yes, father," said Rose, with a laugh. "John is one of the best-natured men living. We love each other very dearly."

"Excellent, my dear, excellent," said Father Titus, again rubbing his hands, as if his benevolent soul was highly gratified at such indications of connubial felicity. "I am delighted to hear that peace and happiness reign in your house. Let it ever be so, my daughter, let it ever be so."

And the priest again softly patted Rose's dainty little hand.

"Oh, there is no danger of its being otherwise, father," said Rose. "I am sure John will ever be kind and considerate, and I know that I would never do anything to displease him."

"Let that spirit ever animate you, my child," responded the priest. "But excuse my lack of hospitality. Will you not take a drop of wine after your long walk? I am sure it will do you good, my dear."

And Father Titus filled one of the glasses from the decanter and passed it to Rose.

"Thank you, father, I — I don't care if I do take a little, although I am not used to drinking wine."

"It will do you no harm. You know the apostle recommends a little wine for the stomach's sake."

Rose really did not wish the wine. But she had little independence of character and feared to displease the priest by declining. She took a sip or two, and would have then put down the wine-glass, but Father Titus gently urged her to drink the remainder, and she at length complied.

"Do you feel better now, my dear?" asked the priest, drawing his chair somewhat closer to hers.

Rose, in fact, already felt a strange warm glow at her heart; her eyes fairly danced in a humid light; and the wine imparted an added flush to her whole countenance.

"I never drank so much wine in my life," she answered. "I had no idea it had such a pleasant effect. Yes, I certainly do feel better. Oh! I feel as if I must get right up and sing or dance. But forgive me, father, I forgot under this strange excitement in whose presence I am."

"There is no need of apology, my dear," said the priest, his own face glowing, but not altogether from the effects of the wine he had drank. "Young folks will be young folks. As a general thing, however, we priests do not favor dancing."

"Yet, Miriam danced before the Lord," interposed Rose, wondering at her own audacity in thus arguing with a priest.

"I should have said as it is practiced nowadays," amended the priest. "Ah! This familiarity with the Bible is the fruit of your Protestant training, my dear," he continued, but not severely. "However, we shall work the old leaven out of your mind, my daughter, and instil in its place the more glorious and satisfying tenets of our own holy doctrines."

As if to carry out this idea more practically, Father Titus casually placed his arm along the back of Rose's chair, and drew even closer to her, until she could feel his hot breath on her cheek.

"Rose, my child," said Father Titus, "I've been thinking much of you ever since your confession this morning."

Rose looked pleased, but said nothing.

"Yes, my dear, I have thought continually about you. But let us try another glass of wine. Nay, my child, I would not counsel you to do anything to your injury," he added, as Rose made some motion as if to object.

"I have always been taught that indulgence in wine is wrong," said Rose, timidly.

"And so it is, if carried to an unlimited extent, my dear," said the artful priest, filling two glasses to the brim. "But this wine is more of a medicine than an intoxicant. Come, my dear, here's to your very good health and happiness. You can conscientiously drink that with me, for whatever I, as your spiritual father, counsel you to do, you may do without fear and without reproach."

Rose said no more, but drank the wine. The former pleasurable effects were intensified by this second experiment. She felt every nerve in her body tingle; then an agreeable, voluptuous languor stole over her. Her eyes closed, half sleepily. She felt the priest move nearer to her; his arm fell around her waist; almost insensibly her head sank upon his shoulder. She experienced no shock, no alarm. All those feelings of the woman, the wife, and the mother, which should have risen up and warned her of her danger, which should have repelled the advances of the priest, seemed to be drowned in the spell which had been cast about her senses by the potent elixir that Father Titus had urged her to take.

It was a delicious draught, a draught fraught with the sweets of Elysium. But it was tinctured with the vapors of moral death!

"Rose, my darling," she hears the voice of the priest murmur in her ear, "do you know that I love you?" pressing gently her cheek.

Oh! Why did not her guardian angel at that moment come to her aid?

Why did not that voice of duty, honor, conscience, thunder in her ear? "Fly! Fly! Rose Delaney! Your very soul is in peril!" One thought of home, of her loved husband and of her innocent children, would have aroused her to a realizing sense of her awful danger.

But alas! those saving thoughts of home and children came not. She was bound in chains as rigid, as unyielding as the serpents' folds that crushed the doomed Laocoon!

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An hour passed by.

"Oh!" cried poor Rose, sobbing, "what have I done! What have I done! Oh! Father Titus, I can never, never see my husband and children again!"

"Nonsense, Rosie," said the priest, soothingly.

"Oh! It was so wrong, so wrong!" sobbed Rosie.

"Nay! There has been no wrong, I solemnly swear to you, my child. I who have power from on high, I who am a priest of

heaven, I absolve thee, daughter, from all wrong, from every taint of sin. With me you can commit no wrong in the sight of heaven. The Blessed Virgin looks with favor on those of her children who sacrifice themselves in her holy cause."

With such casuistry, Rose Delaney's scruples were at length appeased. She came to believe that every word of the priest was an emanation from heaven.

Before Rose Delaney left Father Titus' house that night, she was compelled to take an oath upon her knees,—an oath of the most terrible and binding character,—an oath never to divulge what had transpired that night under the fear of pains and terrors which filled her very soul with dread and horror.

As she rose from her knees, the priest placed a roll of bank-notes in her hand, and then leading her down to the outside door, he murmured,—

"*Benedicite*, my daughter. Peace be unto you and yours."

CHAPTER XIX.

ROSE'S REMORSE AND CONTRITION.—HAPPY HOME DESTROYED.

Rose Delaney went home with a sorrowful heart. In a moment had fled hope, faith, innocence, heaven. She saw that all the gifts, flatteries, and caresses of Father Titus had but one object, the ruin of her soul. Could she tell it to John? No! He would lose his faith in all priests, throw up his situation, leave the church forever. Besides, that dreadful oath! Oh! The anguish of that young heart! The evening winds through the lattice whispered, "You have done wrong!"

She tried to say her prayers, but a shadow stood between her and God. Hope from the spirit world had fled. The tender flower of innocence and beauty was now crushed, and the mother of two lovely babes was a prey to despair. The cold beams of the moon on the shutter reflected a colder heart of desolation.

"Oh! my dear little babes! My sweet, sweet babes!" she whispered as she kissed them in the cradle. "Oh! my babes. Have I disgraced you? Blasted you forever? Oh! John! John! I will tell all! I will confess! I will repent! I will ask your forgiveness!"

But there was no John Delaney present to witness her sorrow or hear her sorrowful confession. Perhaps, after all, it was as well, for the vase was already shattered, the pitcher broken at the fountain, beyond repair.

"Oh! What shall I do? What shall I do?" wailed the wretched woman.

Wildly she wrung her hands in bitterest despair. Conviction had come to her like a sudden blast.

"God forgive me, I was blind! I have been deluded, deceived. This wicked priest deliberately planned my ruin. Pretended to be interested in my family. Gave John his situation solely to cloak his wicked purpose. Oh! Why did I not see through his dark designs? Why did I not withstand temptation?"

She threw herself in a chair, sobbing as if her heart would break. Again she started up and walked the floor.

"Oh, John John! What will you say? What will you do when you hear how I have deceived you? Perhaps he will kill Father Titus. In his agony and despair he would not know what he

did! Oh! How can I confess! How can I tell him of my disgrace!"

It was near midnight when Rose retired, weary and heart-broken from her conscience-stricken mind. And passers-by on the street might have heard the sobbing of a grief-stricken woman as she wept and cried aloud in despair.

John Delaney did not return to his home until late that night, and when he did reach home Rose was in a heavy slumber, but every now and then John observed that she would sigh heavily, as if she had been crying. This worried him so that he determined to wake her. Just as the thought occurred to him she awoke, crying, "Forgive me! Forgive me!" And John, seeing that she had been dreaming, endeavored to soothe her to sleep again.

"What have you been dreaming about, Rose?" said John.

"Oh, John!" said Rose, evasively, "I thought that you had gone away and left me and the children, and that I had been the cause of it, and I was pleading to you to come back and asking your forgiveness. I awoke and found it was but a dream." And Rose burst into tears.

"There, there, never mind, Rose. You know dreams mean exactly the opposite, and such a thing would be impossible, for you know how I love you and the babies, and I know that it would be impossible that you should ever be the cause of my ever having any such intentions."

"Oh, John! You are so kind! But where have you been so late? Why, I sat up for you until most twelve o'clock."

"Well, Rose, I know I was out rather late, but it will not occur again. So now go to sleep, Rosie, and do not dream such wicked dreams again."

All that night Rose lay awake thinking of what a base, heartless wretch she was. While her husband slept heavily beside her, she was silently sobbing.

Morning came at last, and she arose and prepared a dainty breakfast for John. She strove in every way to minister to his comfort. Her contrition took this womanly form. She was soft and gentle in her manner. Her voice took on an exquisite tenderness. John wondered at the change. He felt new love spring up in his heart for her. He looked at her sad, tear-stained face.

"Why, my dear," he said at last, "what can be the matter with you? What has happened?"

"Nothing, John," she murmured.

"Nothing? Come now, Rosie, I know better. Why will you not tell me? Come, confide in your husband."

Confide in her husband? Confess her sin to him? Oh! Never till that moment did she see how hard that would be. Could she blast his happiness at one fell blow? Could she endure his anger, his misery, his despair? Could she stand before him and see those kind and loving eyes look down upon her with the blasting, withering reproach of a deceived and basely injured husband? No! no! Never! She could not do it! The canker of remorse must eat into her heart, must be her silent companion until the end of her days. Never could she know the comfort of sharing this awful burden with another! Never pour into a sympathizing bosom the misery that wrung her own!

CHAPTER XX.

MADAME CHASTINI AND FORCEPS.—TWO PARTNERS IN CRIME.

At the South End there is a street made up of swell-front brick houses. It has at one time been a select quarter of the city, but has now fallen into the hands of various people who may best be described by the term "questionable."

One of these houses—the largest in the street—is occupied by a lady whose name adorns the front door in large gilt letters,—“Madame Chastini, Clairvoyant and Physician.”

It was late in the afternoon of the day following the horse-race, that Madame Chastini was sitting earnestly engaged in conversation with Dr. Richard Forceps in a private room of her house.

It may be as well to state that the madame sailed under two flags; in other words, that to the outer world she was Madame Chastini, while to her very intimate friends—and Dr. Forceps was one of them—she was known by her proper and legitimate cognomen, namely, Jane Ripley.

“Well, as I was saying,” said the woman, “it’s been up-hill work lately. We are running behind expenses, and if something don’t turn up mighty quick, Dick Forceps, we might as well sell out. In other words, you and I will have to dissolve partnership.”

And the woman enforced her words with an emphatic shake of the head.

“Now just keep cool a minute or two, Jenny,” said the dentist. “You are just like all the women; you rattle away like a platoon of raw recruits in the face of the enemy, never knowing what you are shooting at, or whether your guns are loaded and capped or not. Here I’ve been trying to get a word in edgeways for five minutes, and tell you what I’ve come for. I’ve good news for you, if you’ll give me a chance to inform you about it.”

“Good news!” exclaimed the woman. “It’s always good news with you, but of late it’s always turned out pretty bad in the end. Look at that last scrape we had,—that girl that cost us so much only a month ago. A year’s profits gone to the bad at one swoop. And how is it about the girl that’s lying up-stairs now?”

“Whom do you mean? Sadie Burns?”

“Yes, Sadie Burns,—*burn* me for ever having anything to do with the case!”

"Why, I thought she was all right."

"Well, then, she ain't. Nothing's right with you and me nowa-days."

"What's the trouble with the Burns girl? Dr. Ring told me yesterday that she was coming round in apple-pie order."

"Well, she isn't coming round at all, in my belief. And what if she does? There is no money back of her. No rich noodle to squeeze and get a pile out of. Nothing but the regular fee. And if she happens to peg out, why there's another heavy drawback."

"You are taking too dismal a view of things, Mother Ripley," said Forceps, after a short pause. "Now listen to me, and get ready for a change of luck, for it's coming, I assure you."

"Well, I'm listening. Let's hear this precious new rig you have got on the docket."

"That's an ominous term for *you* to use, Jane," said Forceps, jocosely. "On the docket! That means the court calendar. I am sure I hope *our* names will never figure on that precious list."

"I won't sit here to listen to such stupid jokes as that. Go on with this brilliant plan, or whatever it is you were talking about," put in the madame.

Thus adjured, and seeing that his partner in iniquity was in no jesting mood, the dentist drew his chair nearer to her, and in low tones said:—

"Jenny, I've been working up, for two or three months, a lay that will either be a Bull Run or an Appomattox to us. Either a crushing defeat or a victory that shall fill our pockets with the rhino."

In a few words he went on to inform her, what the reader is already acquainted with, in regard to Frank Gildersleeve and Minnie Marston; only he forbore for reasons of his own to tell her who Frank really was, where he lived, and the position in society held by his family.

"And now," he continued, "the young noodle is to bring the girl here to-night, and you must be ready to receive her in your best manner. Play the part of the motherly matron and so forth; you understand."

"And is he really going to marry the girl?" asked the woman.

"That's neither here nor there. It will make no difference in our plans whether he does or not. In either case we shall reap a rich harvest."

"But you hinted at a chance of being defeated in this plan?"

"Only in case the girl has her suspicions aroused. And it will

lie more in your power to prevent that than any one's else. You will have to employ great care to conceal the real character of the house, and see that none of its present occupants have access to the girl."

"I'll take care of that, never fear," said the woman, whose countenance had considerably brightened while the dentist was detailing his plans. "But does this young pigeon whom we are to pluck know what my real business is?"

"Of course, or he wouldn't bring her here. At first I had some difficulty with him on this point. He is soft as putty, you know, where a pretty girl is concerned, and was full of the idea of marrying her outright, acknowledging her to the world, and all that sort of thing. But I have him completely under my thumb, and in the end he will do anything I advise, especially as he fancies I am acting the part of a devoted and a disinterested friend. No, that plan would not have suited me. And so I appealed to his pride, and several other considerations which I need not recapitulate, and the upshot was that he fell into my way of thinking."

"Ah! I see. He is going to fool her. Lead her to think that he has married her, and thus the more easily —"

"Hold on, Jenny. You are going too fast, as usual," interrupted Forceps. "I have said nothing of the kind. But it will make no difference. Think what you please. Married or not married, they both are in my toils, and nothing but such a sum of money as will make you and I rich for life will enable them to escape."

With a few words more of information and caution, the dentist took his leave.

CHAPTER XXI.

MINNIE'S WEDDING NIGHT.—DOUBTS AND FEARS.

The time had now arrived when Frank Gildersleeve must marry Minnie Marston or have his crime exposed to the world. She would consent to no further delay. Marriage or exposure stared him in the face.

At last Frank, for the twentieth time, promised to marry her. Perhaps, he thought, he could have a mock marriage. Induce Minnie to enter a house of malpractice, and there, by fair means or foul, get rid of the evidence of his crime.

At twilight, Frank led Minnie through street after street, until they finally came to a plain brick house in a locality unknown to Minnie. This, Frank said, was the clergyman's residence. Minnie shuddered and clung closer to Frank's arm, an undefined dread creeping over her. Frank rang the bell, and they were shown up-stairs to the minister's rooms.

Minnie involuntarily shrank back. All was dark, save the feeble light from the lamps on the street. A strange, mysterious fear came upon her. Was Frank again deceiving her? Was this to be a mock marriage? Minnie, faint and weary, knew not what to say or do.

The minister asked for the ring. Frank said he had none. Minnie uttered an exclamation of surprise, and fainted and almost fell to the floor. She had been brought up an Episcopalian, and thought the ring indispensable to the marriage service. Frank supported her in his arms, and tried to soothe her fears.

The ceremony was performed. No ring, no certificate, no name or residence of clergyman given her. Minnie trembled in doubt and perplexity. "Is this a minister of God?" she thought. "Am I really married? or is it all a mockery?"

Weak and confused, Minnie was led from the house leaning on Frank's arm. He endeavored to calm her, to allay her suspicions. But she thought, "He has wronged me once, will he not wrong me again?"

Frank led Minnie on through various streets, until he came to a locality once the quarter of aristocracy, but now inhabited by quacks, fortune-tellers, and other questionable characters.

Frank stopped at a house with the name "Madame Clastini"

upon the door-plate. A wagon stood in the street with a long box in it. Minnie heard the expressman say to a coarse-featured woman at the door:—

“Will there be any more to-morrow?”

Minnie shuddered. Perhaps she might be the next victim carried away to an unknown grave. She thought of poor Jennie Clarke, the girl found floating in a trunk in Saugus River; and her mind grew troubled with dark and ominous forebodings.

“Have you the room I ordered all ready?” asked Frank.

A few whispered words were passed between the woman and the young man, and then the two were ushered into the madame's own room.

“This is Madame Chastini, Minnie, my love,” said Frank, as he led the young girl to an easy-chair, and assisted her to remove her cloak. “Do you not feel better now, Minnie?”

“The poor dear is not well. She looks real ill,” said the madame, compassionately. “Will you not let me get you something or other, my dear Mrs. Gildersleeve?”

It was the first time Minnie had ever been addressed by that name, and a faint but wan smile flickered over her countenance as she thanked her hostess.

“I think we had better retire to our rooms, Frank,” she said, “if they are ready.”

“You shall do so at once, and I will show you the way,” said Madame Chastini. “Poor young creature! I declare, your sweet face goes to my very heart. I had a daughter once—dead now, alas!—and you put me *so* much in mind of her. We shall be good friends, I know, my dear. This way, please.”

And so saying, the woman led them up the stairs and through a long corridor to a large chamber, handsomely furnished, and in which a cheerful fire glowed in an open grate.

“Good night, sir; good night, my dear child. You will find a bell at the other side of the mantel which communicates with my apartments. If you require anything, please ring. Once more, good night.”

It was some minutes after the woman left the room before either of the two spoke.

Frank seemed uneasy and disquieted, and walked the room with restless strides. At last Minnie called him to her.

“What can be the matter with you?” she said. “You have acted so strangely ever since we set out from my boarding house to-night. Oh! I am filled with the strangest forebodings!”

And the poor girl began to cry.

"You are needlessly distressed, Minnie," the young man said, approaching her and putting his arm around her. "Nothing is the matter with me at all. Such a step as I have taken, without consulting any of my friends, naturally makes me somewhat serious, perhaps; and then my apprehensions about your own nervous state give me some uneasiness."

"You do not regret having married me, Frank?"

"Regret it! What put such a silly notion as that in your head, Minnie? No, indeed. But you are seriously ill," he exclaimed, as Minnie suddenly fell back, her head dropping upon her chest.

She had indeed fainted!

When Minnie recovered consciousness, she found Frank bending over her, and noted, with a strange chill through her veins, the peculiar expression of his face. It seemed to be made up of anxiety, dread, and a settled, resolute purpose, very different from anything in her experience of him before.

"What did that strange expression mean?"

But before she could give much reflection to the matter, Frank, on seeing her open her eyes, left her abruptly and without a word.

"How strange he acts!" she said to herself. "Why did he go away? What is he about to do?"

He came back while she was thus meditating and approached the bed. In his hand he had a cup about half full of a dark-colored liquid whose pungent odor pervaded the room.

"You are feeling better, my dear, are you not?" said the young man.

"A little," she answered, remarking that the hand which held the cup shook.

"I am glad to hear it, my dear," he answered. "I have brought you a little drink, which Madame Chastini prepared for you. She says it will do you good, and you had better drink it immediately."

He offered her the cup while speaking, and raising herself upon her arm, Minnie mechanically took it.

A thought at the same moment flashed through her mind,—a strange and at the same time a terrible thought, induced perhaps by Frank's strange manner, together with the nauseous fumes of the liquor he had given to her.

"Take it away, Frank!" she cried, with a shudder, and obliging him to relieve her of the cup. "I cannot drink it now. Set it upon the table, and I will drink it, perhaps, by and by."

"Oh, take it now, Minnie," he answered, and she thought his voice sounded harsh and husky. "It is late, and time you were asleep. You will not take the medicine at all if you neglect to do so now."

"I cannot, Frank. Do not urge me," she pleaded, secretly frightened at his persistency, the dark suspicion in her mind thereby strengthened. I could not drink even a drop of water now. Perhaps I shall feel more like it presently."

"This is all childish nonsense, Minnie," the young man said, for the first time in his life speaking to her impatiently. "You *must* drink this medicine. Madame Chastini is an experienced nurse, and she would not recommend anything for you that was not for your good."

But he could not overcome her resolution. The girl was thoroughly alarmed, and even distrusted her lover now. Her native shrewdness, however, counselled her to veil these feelings, but she did not feel them any the less.

Frank had great difficulty in concealing his anger at his obstinacy. He had been so strongly convinced by his evil genius, Richard Forceps, that it was necessary for him to pursue another line of conduct toward Minnie than his love for her and his own conscience had dictated at first, that her opposition had roused the worst side of his nature.

Frank Gildersleeve, too, was a different man altogether from what he was when first introduced to the reader. His father's death had made him in every sense his own master, and continued dissipation and reckless debauchery had already poisoned the springs of his bodily and mental health. He was, as has been seen, a mere puppet in the hands of the designing dentist, who had sounded both the deeps and the shallows of the young man's nature, and knew how to touch either as the exigencies of his plans required.

It was an unhappy day, indeed, that first brought Frank Gildersleeve and Richard Forceps together, — unhappy for them both, as the sequel will show, but thrice unhappy for the younger man.

"So you refuse to do as I wish, Minnie?" Frank asked, finally, and there was almost a menace in the tones of his voice.

"Oh! spare me! spare me! Frank!" exclaimed the poor girl, piteously. "Oh! I fear you would have me commit a great wrong! Oh! how can I do as you wish! How can I do this sin against God!"

"Sin! I do not ask you to commit a sin!" said Frank, nervously.

"Oh! Frank! Frank! I have put my life in your hands!" cried Minnie, sobbing. "I am all alone and unprotected. A stranger in a strange city. I have forsaken home, friends, — all for you. Oh! my poor, distracted parents! How they are weeping for their lost Minnie! Oh! Frank! I implore you, do not deceive me! Think if you had a mother or sister so cruelly wronged! How you would feel for them, weep for them, pray for them! For their dear sake, if not for mine, oh! spare me, Frank!"

"Hush!" whispered Frank, hoarsely. "I say I shall not hurt you. You need not be alarmed, Minnie."

"Then why have you brought me to this murderous house? Why not take me to your home? Why not acknowledge me as your lawful wife?"

"I dare not, Minnie!" burst out Frank. "Oh! I dare not! Society would cast me out! My parents would disinherit me! I should be ruined for life!"

"Then why did you not tell me so before?" asked Minnie, sobbing.

"I dared not tell you before, Minnie! But enough of this. Will you or will you not take this drink?"

"Please — oh please do not urge me! Why, oh, why are you so anxious that I should take this portion?"

"Why? Have I not told you it was solely for your own good?" answered Frank. "But I sha'n't stop here to bandy words with you, Minnie. You have seriously displeased me, and I shall leave you now to think undisturbed over the consequences of disobeying the first request your husband has made to you."

His words frightened her, and forgetting her weakness, she got off the bed and caught hold of his arm before he could gain the door.

"Leave me, Frank!" she cried, wildly. "What do you mean? You would not leave me alone in this strange house. Oh! You are only trying to frighten me. You would not leave me here alone and on our wedding night!"

"Great heavens!" she went on, as a new fear assailed her. "Perhaps we are not married. Perhaps it was all a horrible mockery invented to deceive me. Oh, tell me, Frank, are my senses leaving me, or is my suspicion nothing but a suspicion after all?"

"Did I not take you to the clergyman's house?" said Frank; yet his manner was so constrained that it only increased her fears. "Did you not stand up with me before him, and, while he pro-

nounced the marriage service, did you not swear to love, honor and obey me, till death do us part?"

"True," said Minnie. "But — but was that man a real clergyman?"

"A real clergyman? Why, of course. I didn't ask him to show me his credentials, — his minister's license," said the young man mockingly. "I didn't think it necessary."

"Oh! forgive my foolish fears, Frank! You don't know how perplexed and frightened I am. I was too ill to take any note of the surroundings. You took me to a strange part of the city and rang at a house, but it was so dark that I could not even see the name on the door, nor did I notice the street or its location. Oh, Frank! I was too perturbed to heed all those things then, but now they come to my mind with a terrible force! Even the room was dark! You placed no ring on my finger! I hardly saw the minister's face, and fear I should not know him again if I saw him! What was the clergyman's name, Frank?"

"Oh! Don't bother about such matters now," replied the other, evasively. "What good would it do you to know his name? I am not sure, either, that I remember it correctly."

"Oh! Frank! Frank! Do not deceive me! His name must be on the marriage certificate!"

"I think I forgot to ask for a certificate —"

"Forgot! What, oh! what does all this mystery mean?" exclaimed Minnie, sadly.

"There's no mystery except what your imaginative brain conjures up," said Frank, irritably. "So don't talk any more about the matter. There; get back to bed again, for I've got some business to see about."

And he turned once more to leave the room, but Minnie again clung to him, and besought him not to leave her.

"I must leave you, Minnie," he said. "But *do* cease this silly and childish tirade. What are you afraid of? I am not going to desert you. I shall soon return. I am only going out for a short time on business."

And almost rudely thrusting her aside, he hurried out of the room.

Hours went by and he did not return. Poor Minnie sat waiting for him, too anxious to go to bed, counting the strokes one by one as the clock rung out the passing time. At last the midnight chimes sounded from steeple to steeple, denoting the close of another day.

And still Frank Gildersleeve came not.

CHAPTER XXII.

MINNIE DESERTED. — A STARTLING REVELATION.

All night Minnie Marston was a prey to the most poignant anxiety.

"Why don't Frank come?" she moaned, peering for the fiftieth time out of the window, as some solitary footfall echoed along the pavement. But she was doomed to disappointment. The footstep approached, then passed by, and Minnie again drew back to her couch.

Suddenly she started up. She pressed her hands to her head.

"Oh!" she cried. "Can it be that I am deceived? Has Frank deserted me? Has he persuaded me to come to this strange place, left me among strangers the better to get rid of me? Oh, no! no! Perish the thought! I wrong him! He could not be so cruel. Hark! There is another footstep! This time it must be his. Yes! It is he! It is he!"

Again the poor girl flew to the window. She listened. Her heart fluttered wildly. She could not see the man who was drawing near. So she ran to the door, and listened at the staircase. But the street door did not open, no familiar step ascended the stair. With a groan of bitterest disappointment, Minnie tottered back into the room.

"I see it all now!" she murmured in despair, her hands dropping listlessly into her lap. "God help me! I am deserted!"

She wrung her hands in anguish at the thought.

"But no! I cannot, will not believe it! Frank Gildersleeve a villain? Never! never! Oh! I could not have loved him so! I could not have yielded my heart to a man so base! No! No! Frank Gildersleeve cannot be so cruel, so heartless!"

This reflection changed the current of her thought. A ray of hope glimmered through her troubled soul.

"Oh! I have wronged poor Frank," she continued, regretfully. "How do I know what may have detained him? Perhaps he is ill! Perhaps — oh! perhaps he is dead! Surely he would not have left his Minnie — his own dear wife! Why did he marry me unless he meant to repair — Ha! What am I saying!" she exclaimed, again springing to her feet. The thought suggested was a terrible one.

"What if I am not married, after all! What if that marriage

was a fraud, a sham! Heaven forbid! God could not permit such a shameful deed! No! No! That gentleman I know was a true minister of God. But the awful thought warns me of what I must do. I must rouse myself to act! I will wait till morning. If Frank does not then come, I will search the city through but I will find him. If he is sick, I will take a wife's place at his bedside, minister to his every want and comfort. If he is dead!—"and here her voice broke into a sob, I will mourn him as no other on earth, not even the mother who bore him, can mourn for him. But if he be false!" and Minnie drew herself up, her eyes flashed and her bosom heaved, while her clenched hand was raised to heaven,— "if he be false, then, Frank Gildersleeve, you shall do me justice, acknowledge me as your wife before God and man, or learn what it is to rouse a woman most basely wronged and most cruelly betrayed!"

Throughout that night Minnie maintained her weary watch. But Frank Gildersleeve came not. Morning found her pale and weak. She had not once closed her eyes. She crept to the bed and lay down. Exhausted nature claimed its dues, and she slept. It seemed more like a lethargy than natural slumber.

Hours went by, and still she lay in that death-like trance. At last some sudden sounds — what they were she knew not — startled the young girl and she awoke. But the lethargy that was upon her seemed to bind every nerve and limb. She could not move, and the next instant thanked God in her heart that she could not do so.

Minnie had partially unclosed her eyes languidly, as a sick person awakes from the effects of an opiate. She saw the chamber door slowly and cautiously move on its hinges. With an impulse which she could not have explained to herself, she again shut her eyes, and seemed as one in profound slumber.

The next instant the door was pushed wider and still wider open, and a woman's face peered into the room. Her gross and evil-looking countenance wore an expression of anxiety as she scrutinized the motionless form upon the bed. After a moment she turned, with her hand still on the door, and said in a whisper to some person in the passage way:—

"She is still asleep. Just the same as I left her an hour ago when I sent for you. I tell yer, doctor, I'm just scart!"

"Nonsense!" responded the other. "Scart at what? Here Let me take a look at her!"

And pushing the ogress aside, Dick Forceps tiptoed into the room.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "I believe you are right, after all!"

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed the woman, less cautiously than before. "You've got me into a pretty scrape, Dick Forceps. If the gal's gone and died on my hands, it'll ruin my business completely."

"Pshaw! If she's dead you've had no hand in it; so you needn't fret."

"That's true, but it'll cause an inquest," whined the harridan, "and that'll be just as bad. It will expose me all the same."

"No, it won't. We can fix that all right, Mother Ripley," said Forceps, reassuringly. "If she's dead, why she pegged out from natural causes, unless—"

Forceps paused suddenly.

"Unless what?" demanded Mother Ripley.

"No matter," said the dentist, shortly.

"But it *does* matter," retorted the virago. "I know well enough what you was a-goin' ter say. You was goin' ter say, 'Unless the man that brought her here *had given her a dose of something or ruther*.' Hang me for a witch, if that's the case I'll make him sweat for it, sure's my name's Jane Ripley."

"You're mistaken there," hastily said Forceps. "Frank Gildersleeve's too chicken-hearted for anything of *that* kind. No doubt he'd be glad to get rid of the girl, but he hasn't got the grit to use any foul means. But see; we're wrong. The girl is merely asleep, after all. Look! her bosom rises and falls naturally enough."

"Well, I declare you may set me down as a natural-born!" said Mother Ripley, greatly relieved as she perceived what Forceps had said was true. She had been deceived on entering Minnie's chamber, not understanding the cause of her protracted sleep. The woman's apprehensions were easily excited, and as she saw how still and death-like the girl lay, she had in her alarm despatched an urgent message for Dr. Forceps.

"The fellow'll have ter pay for this fright with all the rest, Dick," she said, with a chuckle.

"All right, that's your concern. Only, old lady, we go halves on the whole thing, you understand."

"Oh, of course, a bargain's a bargain."

"And you needn't fear to bleed Frank Gildersleeve, either. He can stand it."

"Oh, he can, eh?" echoed the woman with a greedy leer.

"He's a high flier, then, is he?"

"You bet."

"Rich as a Jew, I'll be bound."

"If he ain't, his father was, and that's the same thing."

"Come, now, Dickey," said the woman, coaxingly, "tell us who this young greenhorn is,—where he lives, all about him, in short."

"That's none of your concern," answered Forceps, his manner changing; "and it's no part of our bargain, either. He'll pay the bill when the desired services are rendered. I'll see to that. That is all you need to have any interest in."

"Well, you are master here, Dick, and it's my place to obey orders. But I think from what you've let out, that I could make a pretty good guess who this young swell is. Of course, that yarn about his being a partner of your's is all bosh."

Forceps looked keenly at his companion.

"Well," he said, at last, "if you know or surmise anything, Mother Ripley, it's for your interest to keep it to yourself."

"You don't s'pose I'd mention it to anybody but you, doctor?" whined the woman in an injured tone. "Of course I wouldn't. But between ourselves, you know," she added, "when you intimated that the young fellow was so rich, it just flashed over me that he was a son of rich old Gildersleeve up there on the Hill, and —"

"Hush!" said Forceps, in a startled whisper, pointing to the bed, as Minnie made a sudden movement at this announcement.

In fact, the young girl, lying there so admirably counterfeiting deep sleep, had overheard nearly every word of this conversation.

Her sensations at the intelligence may be imagined.

A moment more and she heard the door closed. Then she opened her eyes and found that she was alone.

For a few minutes Minnie lay still and silent. Her eyes were suffused with tears. Her bosom heaved and tossed with the excess of her grief and agony. The veil had been torn aside. She knew that she had been deceived. Her idol had been shattered.

Yes, she knew it all now. Frank Gildersleeve had wilfully, cruelly, wantonly abandoned her.

"But for all that," she cried, rousing herself and dashing away her tears, — "for all that, I am his wife. That knowledge shall nerve my heart. Heaven will lend me strength. For my parents' sake, for my honor's sake, above all, for the sake of my unborn child, Frank Gildersleeve shall be found."

"Ha! what was that they said about Frank not being the dentist's partner? Oh! The villainous scheme! It is all made plain to

me now! He is rich — his father lives on the Hill — *what* hill? Oh! If I only could have learned *that*! I will see Dr. Forceps, — he will tell me. But no! Am I demented? That man is the prime mover of all. Yes; it was he who has led Frank on to this cruel act! No. From him I can gain no help. But there is One,' she added, raising her tear-dimmed eyes to Heaven, — "there is One who will lead me. One who will see justice done to a poor, innocent girl!"

She threw herself on her knees by the bedside, and poured out her soul in fervent petition for aid to that Source whose ear is never deaf to the supplications of the humble and the pure in heart.

Fortified and strengthened in her resolution, Minnie Marston, though still weak and ill, hastily put on her bonnet and shawl to sally out on her quest.

But alas! on attempting to leave the house, she was rudely repulsed. Madame Chastini told her she could not depart, and threatened direful things on her head if she tried to escape. Minnie returned to her room broken-hearted.

For three days Minnie Marston was a prisoner in that house. For three long, weary days, she watched for Frank's return. Oh! what anguish she suffered! Faint and sorrowful, she scarcely dared touch food, for fear of it containing some poisonous drug. At last in despair, Minnie roused herself, and again endeavored to escape from the house. She found the doors barred and the inmates on the watch.

"Oh! Let me out! Let me out!" pleaded Minnie, the tears in her eyes. "Oh! do not keep me in this vile place!"

But Minnie was rudely pushed back into her room, and told to keep quiet or it would be the worse for her. Minnie threw herself on the bed and sobbed aloud.

At length she went to the window, thinking she might see some one and call for help. A little child stood on the sidewalk, looking up at the house. With a swift hope in her heart, she opened the window and beckoned to the child.

"Oh, little girl! have you a mother?" she cried, in a hushed tone, her heart in a flutter.

The little child nodded wonderingly.

"Then, for the love of heaven, fly home! Tell your mother I am a prisoner in this house. Oh! beg her to come and help me out!"

The child hastened home. Told her mother that Minnie was

held against her will. The mother came to the house, and even the neighbors became aroused.

"You have a girl imprisoned here," said the mother to Madame Chastini. "Let her go, or I shall appeal to the authorities."

Madame Chastini bowed and simpered.

"Oh, no!" she said. "There is no girl *imprisoned* in this house."

"Yes, there is," returned the woman. "Let her go at once, or you will see trouble."

After this threat, Madame Chastini dared not hold Minnie against her will. And with apologies and smiles, let her again go out into the wide, cold world.

Minnie Marston was once more free. But whither should she turn her steps?

Alas! She was alone in the desert of a great city!

What should she do? Where was Frank? Was she really married? These thoughts surged wildly upon her troubled mind.

"Oh!" she said to herself, "if I could only find the minister that married me! If I could only learn whether it was a marriage or a cruel mockery!"

And with tear-blinded eyes and sorrowful heart, Minnie stumbled along the streets in despair as to which way to turn. Suddenly a thought came to her.

"I remember, now," she said, pressing her cold hand to her forehead, — "I remember the minister that Frank took me to lived near a church. Oh! if I could only find the place!"

Minnie, weak and weary, searched street after street, looking at the houses and on the doors, hoping to recall the house she had been taken to on her wedding eve.

Coming to a church, she gazed at it long and wonderingly.

"Can this be near where I was married?" she said to herself.

And Minnie looked around, and tried to recall some appearance of the locality that was familiar to her. But in vain. All was wholly new and strange to her troubled senses.

She looked on the doors of the houses to see if a minister lived near the church.

Meeting a clergyman going into his house, Minnie asked, in a tremulous voice "Oh, sir! did you marry me?"

But alas! he had never seen her before, and could give her no hope.

On, on Minnie faltered along the sidewalks, striving to keep down the fast-rising tears that flowed to her eyes. "Oh! mother! father!" she cried in agony; "will you ever forgive me! Ever take me to your hearts again!"

Soon she came to a church on the corner of two streets. Minnie stopped and tried to think if she had ever seen it. A boy was playing on the sidewalk.

"Little boy," said Minnie, "can you tell me whose church is this?"

The boy gazed solemnly into Minnie's sad face as he gave the minister's name.

That name was Morgan. I married her. My room was unlighted, because of paint. No curtains, no blinds, to hide intruding eyes. If she had rung, I could have explained. But alas! she dared not ring the bell. The house, the place, all looked strange to her; and she thought to herself, "Oh! it cannot be here Frank took me!"

And discouraged and down-hearted, she gave way to her grief and despair in a flood of tears.

Suddenly she thought of Madame Chastini's remark that perhaps Frank "was the son of rich old Gildersleeve up on the *hill*." Minnie's heart fluttered wildly, and a new hope dawned upon her mind.

"What *hill* did Madame Chastini mean?" she kept asking herself as she threaded the busy streets. "Up on the hill! Up on the hill!" These words rung continually in her ears, and yet she could find no solution to the problem.

"Look out dar, young Missy," said a voice in her ear, while a hand forcibly laid on her shoulder drew her back just in time to escape being trodden down by the horses of an omnibus.

Minnie had reached the corner of Summer and Washington Streets. The traffic of the day was at its height. At this corner, horse cars, coaches, teams, and humanity ever seem to be mixed up in an inextricable, interminable mass. Two policemen find their hands full in striving to undo this Gordian knot, and piloting timid ladies safely across the Rubicon. In her abstraction, Minnie had become involved in the struggling throng. The policemen were busy, and did not notice her as, in trying to evade the prancing horses of a fashionable *coupe*, she darted directly in the way of an on-coming omnibus. Another moment and our heroine would have been trampled beneath the horses' feet. But help was at hand. Our colored friend Sambo, crossing the street in the nick of time, saw the young girl's danger.

"Guess yer's not much 'quainted in dis yer city, Missy," Sambo said, after having seen Minnie safely to the opposite sidewalk. "De noise an' confusion kinder 'wilders yer, I spec."

In truth, the girl looked very pale and frightened, as well she might.

"I have indeed been in Boston but a short time, sir," she answered, with a hesitating manner, almost unconsciously walking along beside Sambo, as he took his way up Winter Street.

Sambo looked into the sweet young face, and saw by its expression that there was some question she would fain ask.

"Kin I be of any sarvice ter ye, Missy?" he asked. "Ef so, don't ye go fur to hesitate ter say so. I'se ready ter do anythin' possible fur de sake ob yer sweet, innercent face. I 'clar ter gracious, yer puts me so much in mind ob my ol' massa's darter way down Souf—she hed jes' sech a pretty, saint-like look in her blue eyes dat you hab, Missy, in yourn—dat it would be jes' a pleasure fur me ter help yer in yer distress; fur I can't help a-seein' dat you *is* in distress. So yer jes' tell ol' Sambo widout any fear what's on yer min', honey."

"You are very, very kind, sir," said Minnie, in a tone low and broken by emotion, the tears welling to her eyes at this unexpected sympathy. "Perhaps you may help me. Can — can you tell me where—where—*the Hill*, is?"

"De Hill, Missy?" repeated Sambo, rubbing his finger meditatively on his woolly pate, and looking a little bewildered at the question. "Why, I don't tink I knows 'zactly what yer mean. Yer see, Missy, dar's so many hills round yere —"

"I know the question must appear ridiculous," said Minnie, "and that is why I hesitated to ask. I am anxious to find a family who reside on 'the Hill.' My hopes, my happiness, perhaps my life itself may depend on it; but not till now did I realize how difficult, how all but hopeless my search must be in such a large city as this."

There was a pathetic cadence to her voice that touched Sambo's benevolent heart to its depths.

"Cheer up, Missy," he said, tenderly.

They had reached the Common by this time, and the good-hearted colored man, noticing how weak and fatigued she was, induced Minnie to sit down on a bench, while he remained standing before her in an attitude of respectful attention.

"Cheer up, Missy," he continued. "Don't ye go fur ter be cast down. Let me tink a minute. Dere's so many hills, as I was

a-sayin', about Boston. Dere's Copp's Hill down ter Norf End, den dere's Fort Hill, and here right afore us yer see Beacon Hill. Dis, yer see, is whar de airystockysy libs."

"The aristocracy," repeated Minnie to herself. "Perhaps this is the hill that Madame Chastini meant. Oh, sir," she cried, eagerly, "something assures me that Beacon Hill is the place where I must commence my search."

"Ef dat is so," said Sambo, with heightened interest, "den I'se jes' de man dat kin help yer, honey. I knows mos' eberybody up dar. Yer jes' tell me de name ob de fam'bly, and ef dey libs on Beacon Hill I kin jes' tell yer all about 'em."

But Minnie at this intelligence assumed a sudden reserve. Some feeling prompted her not to divulge too much to this stranger.

"You live, then, in this neighborhood?" she asked.

"Yis, honey; right up dar on de hill. Do yer see de chimbleys ob dat ar house—right dar froo de trees, tudder side ob de dome ob de State House?"

Minnie followed the direction of his extended finger, and nodded an assent.

"Wal, dar's whar ol' Sambo libs. Dat's de Gildersleebe's fambly mansion. A mighty fine house it ar', too, Missy. Ben in de fambly dis hundred year," added Sambo, with the pride of an old and attached servant.

"What—what was the name you mentioned?" said Minnie, tremblingly, but suppressing the emotion which she felt at the negro's words.

"Gildersleebe. Dat's de name ob my missus. Poor ol' Massa Gildersleebe, he's dead and gone! He war a mighty good massa to ol' Sambo, dough he wa'n't jes' 'zactly a saint, Missy. De good Lor' hab mercy on him! But yer don't seem bery well, honey," Sambo added in alarm, noticing now the sudden flush on the young girl's cheeks, and the feverish brilliancy which had come into her eyes.

"Oh, I feel better, much better than I did. Now that I have rested I will not trouble you any more, sir. For your kindness to a poor and stricken girl I shall ever, ever be grateful!"

Her voice weakened with the closing words, and taking Sambo's hard, horny hand in her soft and delicate one, she pressed it gratefully, and before the surprised negro could utter another word, she abruptly left him.

"Clare ter gracious, dere's somefin' de matter wid dat poor

chile," said Sambo to himself, watching her for a moment until she was lost to sight. "Ha! She neber tole me de name ob de people she war sarchin' fur, arter all. Dat's cur'ous, mighty cur'ous." And shaking his head and muttering thoughtfully to himself, Sambo went on his way.

Meantime Minnie Marston sped aimlessly along the shady paths. Unconsciously she approached the place where on that Sunday evening months ago she had first met Frank Gildersleeve. Once more she seated herself. Suddenly she recognized the surroundings, and a swift tide of both happy and bitter recollections surged upon her mind.

"Oh! If I had never seen him," she murmured. But other thoughts soon prevailed. The courage which had sustained her hitherto, suddenly failed her when Sambo mentioned the Gildersleeves. At the moment, she shrank from pursuing her purpose. Her natural delicacy and timidity enhanced her dread of the ordeal through which she would be compelled to pass.

How could she meet Frank? How meet his mother? No doubt a cold, haughty, fashionable woman. How could she — the poor, unsophisticated country girl — demand of this proud society-woman recognition, redress, and protection? These were her first reflections; but when she thought of her husband's baseness, of her own destitute situation, and the extreme and peculiar necessity which urged her for her own self-protection to falter not, all her courage came back. She rose hastily from the bench.

"Yes, I will confront these people in their very parlors, ay, if they were crowded with fashionable guests. Why should I fear? I am an honest, upright woman. In God's sight I have sinned not, unless it were in my weak and almost idolatrous worship of one whom I now know to be the basest and wickedest of mankind. Oh! How he did plead for my forgiveness when he found I would not tamely submit to my wrongs. How fervently he vowed that he would marry me, cherish me with all the fondness of a husband's devoted love! I forgave him,—and this is how he has kept his word! It would be weak, foolish, criminal to let him longer enjoy his fancied security! No! I will not do it! You shall acknowledge me as your wife, Frank Gildersleeve, to your family and to the world!"

How little did she know her strength of purpose! How soon was she to learn the lesson of the world, that even the course of justice must bide its time!

CHAPTER XXIII.

MINNIE AND MRS. GILDERSLEEVE. — MOTHER AND SON.

On entering the Gildersleeve mansion Sambo was met in the hall by Mrs. Gildersleeve's maid.

"Missus is all of a fret because you've been gone so long, Sambo," she said. You'd better hurry up. *Perhaps* she won't give you a piece of her mind, nor nuthin'."

And with a toss of her head and a knowing smile, the pert maid went to her mistress' *boudoir* announcing Sambo's return.

Mrs. Gildersleeve was not in a particularly amiable mood. Several things that day had gone wrong with her. The strange change in Gertrude's manner secretly worried and perplexed her. Frank's conduct added its sting. His recent dissipations had become noised abroad, despite every precaution that had been taken to conceal them. Only the previous night, while she was entertaining several guests at supper, the young man had staggered into the room in a state bordering on beastly intoxication. This was the crowning cup in the mother's vexations. Peccadilloes she could have overlooked. According to her creed a young man of Frank's standing in society might be guilty of many a trifling lapse in morals, and no harm done. A woman of the world, she had been taught to pass over in silence much in the conduct of men that would meet the stern moralist's bitterest denunciation. But to see her own son besotted; and, worse than all, that he should make an exhibition of himself before her guests, was touching her strongest prejudice, — her family pride.

"This condition of things has reached its limits," she said to herself. "To see my son a drunkard is more than I can bear. I have been too lenient. Henceforth, I shall resort to harsher measures. I will have an immediate understanding with Frank. He shall live like a rational being, if he remains an inmate of my house. Otherwise, I will have him placed under restraint. Yes, it is clearly my duty as a mother, responsible for her son's welfare, to put a check to his wasteful and sottish career."

Ah, proud, worldly woman! Why had you not thought of this before? Why not have checked the ruin ere it was too late?

It was at this moment that her maid entered, followed by Sambo. The latter had been sent to the family lawyer to request him to call on Mrs. Gildersleeve, with reference to some matters connected with her late husband's still unsettled estate.

"You have been gone a long time," she said, as Sambo entered. Mrs. Gildersleeve was too well bred ever to raise her voice even when angry; but she had a way of rendering her words mercilessly cold and severe, which, aided by the flashing glance of an eye, left her inferiors uncomfortable for hours afterwards.

"Beg pardon, missus," said Sambo, nowise daunted by the usual signs of his mistress's displeasure. "Marsa Vellum war away when I got ter de offis, so I waited an' waited till he kim back. He say he be happy to wait on yer dis ebening."

"Very well; you can go. Victorine," Mrs. Gildersleeve added, turning to the maid, "there's a ring at the door. Let me know who it is. And, Victorine, tell the footman that I am at home to nobody, — *positively* nobody, this afternoon."

In a moment the girl returned.

"Please, ma'am, it's a young woman."

"A young *woman*!" said Mrs. Gildersleeve, with a stare of haughty surprise. "Recollect yourself, Victorine. A young *lady* you mean."

"Beggin' your parding, missus, it's a young *woman*."

"A young woman, and at the *front* door!"

"Yes'm. James told her to go round to the servants' entrance if she wanted anything."

"And very properly, too," replied the lady.

"But please, ma'am, she begged very earnestly to see Mrs. Gildersleeve."

"To see me!" repeated Mrs. Gildersleeve, elevating her eyebrows as if incredulous at such an unheard-of piece of audacity.

"Yes'm."

"And what reason did she give for making such a request?"

"Please, ma'am, she said as how she had somethin' very particular to say to you."

Mrs. Gildersleeve reflected an instant.

"Probably she has come on some charitable mission. Tell the young woman, Victorine, that it will really be impossible for me to attend to her to-day. My charity days, you may remind her, are Tuesdays, *and* in the morning."

The maid again went out, but almost immediately returned.

"Please, ma'am," said Victorine, tossing her head, "the young woman persists in seeing you. She says she don't come for charity, and what she wants to see you for is of the utmost importance to yourself."

"Very well, Victorine," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, with a sigh of resignation, and rising from the luxurious *fauteuil* in which she had been negligently seated during this time, "I will see this very troublesome person. On second thoughts, I think you had better show her into the dining-room."

On entering the apartment, Mrs. Gildersleeve stood for a moment apparently struck by the beauty and grace of her visitor, for that visitor was none other than Minnie Marston.

Thus these two women, each of whom was to exercise such powerful influence on the future life of the other, met for the first time.

Mrs. Gildersleeve was an observant woman. She saw at once that the young girl before her, though simply attired, belonged to no sense to what she called the *canaille*.

"You wish to see me, young woman, I am told," she said, in her stately manner, without seating herself, and thereby compelling Minnie to remain standing.

The young girl was deeply impressed by Mrs. Gildersleeve's appearance. It was her first meeting with this type of woman. She had read in novels of ladies who, by virtue of their wealth and social position, arrogated to themselves the airs, graces, and homage of a queen; but she had no idea that such personages actually existed, especially in democratic America. Yet as her eyes fell on the imposing figure of Mrs. Gildersleeve, on her gleaming silks and costly laces; as she noticed the queenly grace and dignity of her carriage, and saw the clear-cut features, with the air of classic repose which dwelt upon them, she felt a momentary awe and confusion that made it impossible for her to answer at once.

Mrs. Gildersleeve, noticing her embarrassment, perhaps insensibly propitiated by it, and touched beside by some spark of womanly feeling, motioned for Minnie to be seated. She then said:—

"Do not hesitate to tell me what has occasioned this visit. I believe you are a stranger to me. I do not recollect ever having seen you before."

"No, madam," replied Minnie, timidly, "I am, I think, an utter stranger to you."

Her soft, sweet voice, and the modest, downcast eyes, impressed the haughty woman still more favorably. Her manner softened.

"Well, my child,"—how Minnie's heart fluttered at this encouraging term!—"take time to collect yourself. I am completely at your service. My servant informed me that your communication was of personal importance to myself."

"I may not have used the phrase advisedly, madam," replied Minnie, gradually recovering her ease. "It will be for you to judge."

"You do not come to solicit charity, I was told?" said Mrs. Gildersleeve, encouragingly.

"No, madam. I came for— for justice."

The girl's manner changed. She was now on firm ground. The memory of her wrongs steeled her heart.

At the word "justice" Mrs. Gildersleeve straightened up haughtily in her chair. She had not the remotest idea of what this girl had come to say to her; but instinctively her combativeness was roused.

"Justice?" she repeated.

"Yes, madam, *justice*!"

"Ah! Perhaps you are one of my tenants. Your parents have been unable to pay their rent, and my agent undoubtedly has been somewhat exacting? Is such the case?"

"Alas, no! madam. I come to you with the hope of enlisting our sympathies as a wife and mother in the cause of a poor, misguided, but loving girl."

"You mean that you have been unfortunate?"

"Yes, madam; very, very unfortunate. If to be the victim of a wicked, cruel plot—if to be deceived by a specious scoundrel—if to find his promises but empty words—his oaths, shameless perjuries—if *that* is to be unfortunate, then I am so indeed!"

Mrs. Gildersleeve, at these pathetic words, uttered with all the eloquent feeling of a heart moved to its utmost depths, became again the hard, worldly-minded woman.

"I may commiserate your lot," she said, frigidly, "but it is impossible for me to be of any assistance to you. There are homes and houses of refuge provided for abandoned women who desire to reform; and to which I am happy in being a constant contributor. To one of these institutions I would recommend you to apply."

Minnie heard the heartless and insulting words like one in a dream. Gradually their sense and meaning stole upon her mind. A chill like that of death ran through her veins, and then indignation sent the hot blood leaping to neck, cheek and brow.

Impetuously, she sprang to her feet.

"How dare you draw such an inference as that, madam!" she cried. "What! I, daughter of a minister of God, the vile thing you intimate! The very thought is degradation — the words an insult! Madam, in the name of everything pure and sacred to a woman's, a wife's, a mother's nature, take back those wicked words!"

"This — this is very strange conduct!" gasped Mrs. Gildersleeve, pale and angry. Do you know, young woman, whom you are addressing in this insolent manner? And in my own house! I will tolerate your presence no longer. My servants shall show you to the door."

And the haughty woman, for once moved by natural feeling beyond her usual powers of self-control, rose to leave the room.

"Stay, madam!" said Minnie, arresting her. "Perhaps when you learn the wrongs that stung me to that which you term insolence, you will find some excuse for my impetuosity. You have a son —"

Mrs. Gildersleeve turned quick as lightning. In those four words the significance of Minnie's presence in her house was made clear.

"Do *you* know *my* son?" she asked slowly.

"Alas! yes, madam."

"And you dare, brazen creature that you are, to come to me — *his* mother — with the tale of my son's profligacy and your own shame!"

"Again you mistake me, madam," said Minnie, with a great effort choking down her rising indignation at this second undeserved reproach. "Do you see aught in my face that marks me as the abandoned wretch you name? Are these poor garments that my humble means alone can afford, the raiment in which a libertine decks out the partner of his guilt? Do you behold upon me the glittering gems and gewgaws that illicit love exacts as its tribute? Madam, I am *not* your son's mistress; I *am* his —"

"Hold!" exclaimed Mrs. Gildersleeve. She had listened up to this point, still, breathless almost as a marble statue. She knew instinctively to what climax the young girl's words were tending. "Say not another word now. Wait."

She went to the dining-table, and touched a bell. Sambo appeared at the door in answer to the summons. His eyes opened to their widest extent as he beheld the young girl whom he had befriended: but he was too discreet to make any remark.

"Tell Mr. Frank that I wish to see him in this room. And be sure and say nothing further."

Sambo bowed and retired.

Not a word passed between the two women in the interval. At length footsteps were heard approaching. The next instant Frank Gildersleeve entered. His mother stood between him and Minnie. He therefore did not at first perceive the latter; but he saw by his mother's look that something unusual had occurred, and his heart sank within him. Suddenly Mrs. Gildersleeve moved aside.

"Frank!"

"Minnie!"

The exclamations were simultaneous.

"So you *do* know this girl, Frank Gildersleeve?" demanded his mother.

"I—I have seen her, mother."

"Enough!" Then turning to Minnie she continued: "You claim to bear some honorable relation to my son?"

"I do," was the low, tremulous reply.

"Please state the nature of that relation."

There was an instant's silence. No sound but the ticking of the Ormolu clock on the mantel, the faint rustling of the drapery curtains gently swaying in the summer wind, or the beating of their own hearts.

It was an instant of terrible, agonized suspense to at least two of the occupants of that room. Then came the words, low, distinct, emphatic:—

"I am his wife."

The haughty woman of the world fixed her eyes with an intense, a burning gaze upon the speaker.

What thoughts, — what uneasy, bitter thoughts were passing in her mind could not be read in her impassive countenance. Minnie, pale and fair as a lily, her fragile and delicate figure drawn up to its full height, her soft, gazelle-like eyes meeting unflinchingly the haughty gaze that was bent upon them; while Frank Gildersleeve stood with eyes downcast, his limbs trembling, his fingers nervously interlocked, the very picture of confused and confounded guilt.

Such was the tableau which continued undisturbed several minutes after Minnie had uttered these startling words.

Mrs. Gildersleeve's lips moved once or twice, as if she essayed to speak, but no sound followed the motion. Her hand stole up to her forehead, and swept the white brow as though some crushing

weight rested there, which she vainly sought to brush away. At length she seemed by an effort to regain her customary self-poise, and to herself she murmured :—

“I do not, will not believe it. This girl is an artful, designing creature, and her claim a trumped-up one to extort money!”

But though she said this to herself, it was impossible for her to look into the frank and fearless countenance of the young girl, into those pure and limpid hazel eyes, without seeing that truth, purity, virtue, those jewels of a woman’s soul, beamed in every look, were written in every line and lineament in nature’s plainest handwriting. She gave no sign of the impression thus produced, however, but turned to her son, and then made a step toward him.

“Frank Gildersleeve,” she said, her tones faltering, and clear and sharp as the ring of crystal,—“Frank Gildersleeve, you hear what this girl avers. Is it true, or is it a lie? Are you her husband, or are you a scoundrel, a villain, a profligate, as well as a gambler and a drunkard?”

Frank trembled like an aspen at these severe and ringing tones. His lips worked convulsively. Great drops of perspiration beaded his brow. The terrible effects of his dissipated habits were never so palpably visible as now. Minnie was no stranger to his faults. She had in the last few months frequently seen him under the influence of liquor. She had plead with him and prayed for him time out of mind,—but in vain. Still, with all his faults, or rather despite them, she loved him; and even now, knowing how cruelly he had intended to desert her,—notwithstanding her good name depended on the word of this weak and vacillating man, that the cause of right, justice, and her woman’s honor hung trembling in the balance,—she felt a great pity and tenderness for him steal upon her soul. Her eyes grew humid; she moved a step or two toward Mrs. Gildersleeve, and with clasped and outstretched hands, she said :—

“Oh! madam, be merciful to your son. Do not brand him here in the presence of one who loves him but too well—”

But the cold, proud woman—outwardly cold, though her bosom was a seething caldron of conflicting emotions, though her heart was torn with bitterest anguish—raised her hand commandingly.

“Be silent, girl. I am speaking to my son! Answer me, Frank Gildersleeve,—have you *dared* marry this woman?”

His mother’s eye was upon him. He would have given worlds if he had possessed the moral courage to stand forth and take Minnie in his arms, and boldly proclaim her to be his wife, and tell her that he would protect her against every ill of life.

How fittingly, he thought, as he looked at her, would she adorn any station, even the most exalted! How naturally would that perfect form take on and set off the elegant appointments of a modish costume; how appropriately would diamonds become that shapely hand with its taper fingers, or the small delicate ears, and gleaming, milk-white neck! How his heart now yearned for her! How proud, thus arrayed, would he have been to introduce her to all *upper tendom*, and be able to say, "See! Does she not outshine you all? Is she not a true patrician by right of nature, if not by right of birth?"

But in the presence of his mother, under the quelling eye of that worldly woman, who had domineered over him from his cradle with a tyranny that warped his very nature and repressed and chilled all the warm and generous impulses of his soul, he dared not acknowledge the truth. And so, like a craven, nerving himself to the meanest and most despicable action of his whole shameless life, he said, hoarsely and under his breath:—

"This girl is an impostor. Marry her! Is it likely, mother, that a Gildersleeve would stoop to such an alliance?"

This avowal struck terror to Minnie's soul. She uttered a low cry, and caught hold of the back of a chair to save herself from falling.

"You have not answered my question," said Mrs. Gildersleeve. "I want a direct, straight-forward reply."

"Frank! Frank!" cried Minnie. "In God's holy name, think of what you do! Oh! You will not surely deny—"

"Hush, girl!" interposed the imperious voice of Mrs. Gildersleeve. "Now, answer me, Frank Gildersleeve. Did you or did you not marry this girl?"

"I—did—not!"

A sigh of relief from the mother, but from Minnie's lips came an indignant cry. All the spirit of the girl was roused. She strode directly to Frank Gildersleeve, and looking him in the eye exclaimed:—

"Liar, perjurer, scoundrel! Dare you stand here in the presence of your mother, in the presence of the woman whom you swore to love and honor as your wife,—in the presence of Almighty God, who heard that vow and recorded it, as He now hears and records your black, shameless, and cruel falsehood,—dare you thus stand here, I say, and brave Heaven's judgment? Oh, Frank! Frank! I have loved you with the purest and tenderest love! I have prayed

for you when even the mother who bore you would have cursed you and cast you out from her heart and home, if she knew but a tithe of the deep dishonor and monstrous villany of which you have been guilty! I have found excuses for you, when you have subjected me to the cruellest pain and anguish, — when you have wrung my heart until it seemed as if it must break or that I must go mad! — at all and every stab which your conduct has given me, I have never ceased for one moment to love you. Your first crime against me I forgave. You kept me for months in cruellest torture ere you would fulfil your promise and marry me. All that I forgave. But now, now that you foully seek to disown that marriage, now that you throw upon me the imputation of being a wanton and an out-cast, and leave not only on my name but on that of your unborn child a stigma too foul for my lips to utter, — you shall learn that even a woman's devotion has its limits. To-day you deny me justice; to-morrow, Frank Gildersleeve, I will seek it with the strong hand of the law!"

"This is all very good acting, mother," the young man said, with a mighty effort struggling for composure. "This girl evidently has mistaken her vocation. Her art would command a high premium on the stage. Here, pray tell her, it is entirely thrown away."

This speech was not without effect on Mrs. Gildersleeve. It almost confirmed her doubts, and inclined her strongly to believe that, however, her son might have misused this girl, he had at least never married her. To her, actuated as she was by motives difficult now to explain, this was unspeakable relief. A cunning thought suggested itself to her.

"You talk of the law, wretched girl!" she said. "We shall never drive you to that extremity. You come here demanding justice. You shall have all the justice which you can show you are entitled to. People in *our* position of life are subject to much imposition. To protect ourselves we are compelled to accept no tale of distress without the accompanying proofs. Now, heed well what I have to propose. You claim that my son married you. Well, prove it."

She paused. Minnie looked at her in bewilderment. Her heart quaked with a new and unforeseen terror.

"You do not speak. There were witnesses to your marriage, if married you were."

"Indeed — indeed there were, two witnesses," cried Minnie with a gleam of hope.

"Very well. Bring them here to me. Let them confront my son."

"Alas! Alas! Madam!" sobbed the stricken girl, "I never saw them before or since. I do not even know their names!"

"That is unfortunate, but still not beyond remedy. You know the clergyman's name who performed the ceremony?"

"My God! You will drive me distracted!" cried Minnie. "I never heard his name spoken. I do not know him."

There was a cruel gleam in Mrs. Gildersleeve's eye.

"Well, even that does not make your case utterly hopeless. There is one last resort, — one final article of proof. Produce that, and enable me to prove its validity, and my son shall acknowledge you as his wife."

"Oh! speak! speak! madam! On my knees I implore you to name this last, this precious hope!"

"I refer to your marriage certificate. No one can be legally married without that. What! You don't mean to tell me that you have no certificate!"

The blow fell upon the poor girl with crushing force. She could not speak. Her heart seemed breaking.

Mrs. Gildersleeve's manner changed. Her brow darkened. She struck the bell. A footman appeared.

"James, show this *creature* to the door, and never at your peril permit her again to come into this house!"

And poor Minnie, without strength to utter a word in protest, without spirit left to say another word in appeal, tottering, heart-broken, utterly crushed, was led to the door, and thrust rudely out upon the street.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ROSE DELANEY IN THE TOILS.—PREPARATION FOR A JOURNEY.

One day Father Titus, on leaving the Gildersleeve mansion, where he had been holding conversation with Gertrude, took his way across the Common. He was in a meditative mood, but his reflections were suddenly disturbed by a well-known voice behind him.

"A penny for your thoughts, Fr. Titus!"

It was Rose Delaney.

"Why, Rose, what are you doing down here so far away from home?" asked the priest.

"I have been shopping, and I was just going home when I saw you walking along, Father, as if your thoughts were a long way off."

"I was thinking of you, Rose, and I was also thinking of a dear friend of mine whom I have left,—a convert, like yourself, to our holy faith."

"Who is it, Father? Any one I know?"

"Her name is Gertrude Gildersleeve. She is the most devout convert I ever saw. I expect eventually she will enter holy orders."

"Does she belong in Boston?"

"Oh, yes, she resides with her parents on Beacon Hill, in the winter. I first met her at the Notre Dame Academy, of which, as you know, Rose, I am the Spiritual Director. Her family don't know that she is so thoroughly wrapped up in religion, but she is only one of a great many others who have secretly espoused the church. Don't you wish you had entered a holy life, Rose?"

No, indeed, I do not," said Rose, tossing her head. "I almost lead a holy life as it is. There is John in the church all the time. Then do I not see you, Father, almost every day. To say nothing of going to the church and its surroundings so frequently to see my husband."

"That's a fact, Rose. I think you are about as good as a great many I know who are in holy orders. By the by, Rose, I wish you would come in to see me this afternoon. I have something to tell you."

That afternoon Rose was in Father Titus's room at the appointed time. She was greeted with the usual freedom of the priest, and after partaking of a glass of wine, seated herself and said:—

"I bought several little things for myself this morning, and here

is a little present I bought for you," producing a small gold tooth-pick.

"Rose, you are too thoughtful. I can never forget you. How I wish that you could remain with me all the time."

At this point Father Titus moved his chair close beside Rose and put his arm about her neck.

"Why, Father Titus, ain't you afraid somebody will come in?"

"No, my dear, replied the priest, kissing her fondly. "They would not dare to enter my room without knocking."

"Oh! dear, if my husband were to find this out he would kill me!" gasped Rose, in a tremor.

"Never fear, Rose. Your husband will never know it, and besides, what he does not know will never do him any harm. And you know John has been reared a good Catholic, and he would never dream of a priest doing a wrong. So we are free from all suspicion on the part of your husband."

"But, Father Titus, the servants in the house know that I come to your room every day. They might suspect something wrong."

"You are too sensitive on that point, Rose. Don't you know that your good actions in attending church, going to confession and communion regularly, place you above suspicion? The servants or any one else would not dare to breathe a word of scandal against you."

Rose prepared to leave.

"You are not going so soon, Rose?"

"Oh, yes; it is getting late, and I want to see John before I go home."

"Well, come here and kiss me, and here is a little present for yourself."

After complying with his wishes, Rose received from Father Titus a roll of bills, and bidding him good-by, quitted the room.

After leaving Father Titus's house she proceeded to find her husband, to tell him of her good fortune and to give him the money she had just received. For Rose loved her husband fondly, and was only too glad to meet him with good news.

"Well, Rosie, been taking a walk?" asked John as Rose met him at his work.

"Yes, John, and just see the handsome present I received from Father Titus. I didn't want to take it, but he insisted. He is so good, John, I hope you will do everything in your power to please him."

"Well, you can just rest your mind easy on that, for I do great deal more now than I need do, but he is so kind to you, I feel it almost a duty I owe to him to do all that mortal man can. And I know that he appreciates it, too."

"Yes, John, he speaks about you every time I see him and say he likes you ever so much."

"I don't know how I can ever repay him for his kindness to us. But you had better go home now, Rosie, and get tea ready, and will be home early and we will go to the theatre to-night."

And Rose and John Delaney separated. Rose to go home to her little family with her shame burning in her breast. Many a time she thought would arise within her that she was doing wrong and that she ought to tell her husband, but then she thought that an exposure at that time would sacrifice her husband's situation. She would console herself with the assurance that Father Titus gave her, that "What your husband does not know will never do him any harm," and withheld from him the secret of her shame.

There was no happier man that night, on his return from his daily labors, than John Delaney, living in ignorance of his wife's shame. His home to him was a kingdom and he the king.

"Come, Rosie, let's have tea as soon as possible and we will go to the theatre. You know I promised you this afternoon."

"I know, John, but I don't care about going. I would rather stay at home with you and the children."

"Nonsense! Come, there is no time to waste."

And after tea was over, John and Rose went together to the theatre.

The next day Rose paid her usual visit to Father Titus.

"Rose, I have been thinking about you ever since you were here yesterday. I am thinking about going to New York next week, and if John would allow you, I would like to have you go with me."

"I don't know, Father Titus, that he would object; but I could not get ready to go next week, as I have nothing to wear."

"Nonsense! You get his permission, and everything else will be attended to. Besides, it will do you a world of good to have a change of air and to be free from your family duties for a little while."

"Well, I will ask John. I know he won't refuse, and I would like to go very much indeed. When do you propose to start?"

"A week from to-morrow. You ask John, and then come and see me to-morrow morning, and I will let you have some money."

And after a hasty good-by, as Father Titus had company, Rose departed with a fluttering heart to get her husband's permission to accompany Father Titus to New York. She was not long in finding her husband, to whom she related her interview with Father Titus. John Delaney at first refused her request.

"I don't see why you should object, John. I think it very kind and thoughtful of Father Titus to ask me to go with him. Besides, John, you know I can call and see my sister and cousins in New York."

"I know all that, Rosie, but who is going to take care of me and the little ones while you are gone?"

"Oh, I guess you can take care of yourselves for three days. I am only to be gone that length of time."

"Well. All right. You can go. I suppose I can stay at your mother's while you are gone?"

"That's a capital idea, John. And now I will run in and tell Father Titus. He will be pleased, I know."

And Rose Delaney left her husband and sought Father Titus, who was more than pleased when he heard the news. Rubbing his hands together and laughing, he said, "So John said that you might go with me?"

"Yes. And was very glad to think that I had an opportunity of going to New York. I haven't been there since I was a child."

"Well. Here is some money. I want you to buy the nicest dress you can buy in Boston, and whatever else you want."

"O! thank you, Father Titus?"

And Father Titus embraced and kissed her, when she departed and again sought her husband, to whom she had handed the money and wished him to go with her to make her purchases, which he did.

CHAPTER XXV.

SPIRITUAL UNCLE AND NIECE. — A VISIT TO NEW YORK.

The week of preparation previous to the trip to New York passed away very quickly to John Delaney. For John loved his wife, and he did not like to have her away from him. He looked sadly forward to the day now rapidly approaching that would separate them, even though it was only for three days. Rose had never been away from home before, and it seemed to him as if he was about to bid her a long farewell ; that she was going away for a year or more, instead of a few days only.

While the time was flying so swiftly with John Delaney, it was just the reverse with Father Titus and Rose. Every hour seemed a day to them. During the week Rose was busy with dressmakers, milliners, and shop-keepers every day, buying dresses, gloves, kid boots, and other articles to complete a lady's outfit.

The morning of departure at length arrived, and many were the farewells that Rose received from her family. John, with tears in his eyes, accompanied his wife to the depot. On arriving they met Father Titus.

"Ah! Good morning, Rose. You are on hand, I see, bright and early. And I declare I never saw you look handsomer in my life. John, you should feel proud of Rose."

"I do, Father Titus ; and I feel sad to think that she is going away at all. I believe if I had not promised her, I should have retracted before now."

"Never fear, John. I will take good care of her and bring her safely back to you. I will write to you to-morrow and tell you all about our trip, and how Rose is conducting herself."

"Oh! John knows that I will conduct myself properly, and that I am in good hands," said Rose, with a smile.

"When will you return, Father Titus?" asked John.

"Friday night. You can have a carriage at the depot to meet us. We shall arrive about six o'clock," said Father Titus.

And after John Delaney had seen Father Titus and his wife comfortably seated in a parlor car, he waited until the bell rang for the train to start, and after once more bidding his wife and Father Titus good by, and again cautioning the reverend father to take good care of Rose, he watched the train move slowly out of the

depot, taking from him the person he loved dearer than the whole world.

With a sigh he turned away and started to see his mother-in-law who was an old English lady of the finest type, who had been a magnificent-looking woman in her young days. A woman who could never believe a wrong in any person, and who had a pleasant word for everybody. Such a mother-in-law had John Delaney.

"Good morning, John. I suppose you have been to the depot to see Rose off?" said Mrs. Ball as John entered the door. "Now I want you to sit right down and have some breakfast; you certainly must be hungry by this time."

"Oh, no, thank you, Mrs. Ball. I am not hungry. I will be in to dine with you this noon, however. How are the babies? Do they annoy you?"

"Not at all. I think they would rather stay with me now, than with their own mother, wouldn't you, my little fellow?"

And Mrs. Ball tossed little Freddie, John's oldest baby, up and down playfully. The little fellow looked at his grandmother and laughed as though he knew what she said.

"When do you expect Rose home, John?" asked his mother-in-law.

"She will be here Friday night. I hope she will enjoy herself. She said she should call on her cousins while in New York."

"Oh, yes, she told me so yesterday, John."

"Well, I think I will now go to work and will be here to dinner."

And after bidding her "good morning," John Delaney went to his labors of the day.

The train that bore Father Titus and Rose Delaney to their destination, after a long and weary journey, finally reached New York. A carriage was engaged and they were driven to the hotel, where they were shown their rooms, which had been previously engaged, — one apartment leading from another. Tea was served in their room and wine ordered.

"My dear Rose, you must be fatigued after our long ride to-day, and a glass of wine is so refreshing, it will do you no harm, take my word for it," said Father Titus, persuasively.

"But, father, I don't care for it; I would sooner have a cup of tea," replied Rose.

"Very well," said the priest. "By the by, Rose, I want to caution you about one thing. While we are here all of our meals will

be sent to this room, and in presence of the waiters and servants you must call me 'Uncle,' as we are registered on the book in that way."

After tea was over, Father Titus put on his spectacles and read the evening paper which he had sent for, and after telling Rose that the inner room was hers, and that she could retire when she liked, he took out his breviary and began perusing it. Rose retired to her room, but she could not sleep. Thoughts of home and her little children came crowding fast upon her mind. She knew that she was doing wrong in thus coming with Father Titus, and in allowing him to represent her as his niece.

Morning came, and after breakfast a carriage was at the door for Mrs. Delaney to go shopping. She drove to Stewart's on Broadway and selected two silk dresses, after which she called on her cousins. After a long drive she arrived home in time for dinner, when again the wine bottle was the first thing that was offered her. This time she did not refuse, but yielded to Father Titus's urging. And during her stay in that hotel there was a continual drinking of champagne and other wine during and between meals.

"I think I will write a letter to John this afternoon," said Father Titus after dinner.

"Oh, yes!" cried Rose, pleased at the idea. "Tell him how lonesome I am away from him, and how I long to see him. And tell him to be sure and meet us at the depot."

"John is a good fellow," said Father Titus. "He believes everything you say to him. I don't wonder at it, however, for you have such an earnest way about you. Oh, Rose! If John were not in the way, I believe I would sacrifice my calling and go with you to some other part of the world."

"Father Titus, you must not talk in this way. You frighten me," exclaimed Rose.

Friday morning, the day of their return, at length came, and everything was in readiness to depart for home.

John Delaney was at work in his house, having it cleaned up and put in order so that Mrs. Delaney would be pleased on her arrival. He went to see his mother-in-law early that morning to tell her how pleased he was that the long-looked-for day of Rose's return had arrived.

He found Mrs. Ball sitting in the rocking-chair playing with little Freddie; but when John entered she put Freddie down.

"Everything seems pleasant this morning, John. You, and the

babies ; even the beautiful sun seems to rejoice in the return of Rose. It seems as though she had been gone a month," said the mother-in-law.

"From her letter I should judge that she would rather be home, even though she is having such a good time," returned John.

"Well, you know she is young, John, and I hope you will always give her as good a time as you can, for she is a good wife and has always been a dutiful daughter."

"Yes, I know that, Mrs. Ball. It has always been my delight to afford Rose all the pleasures in life I could, and I hope I will always do so. I am going to meet her at the depot, and when she arrives I will bring her in to see you immediately."

And so saying, John Delaney took his departure, little knowing as he did so that he had spoken to Mrs. Ball for the last time. Fifteen minutes later his wife's mother was dead. John was sent for immediately, and all his joy was now turned to sorrow. Upon arriving at the house, John found Mrs. Ball just where he had left her a few minutes before, sitting upright in the rocking-chair, cold in death.

The sorrow of John Delaney knew no bounds ; for he loved that noble woman as if she had been his own mother.

But how to break the sad tidings to his wife he knew not. He well knew the love she bore for her mother. He feared the sudden news of her death would unnerve Rose and affect her health disastrously.

It was with a heavy heart that he went to the depot in a carriage and awaited the arrival of the train from New York. Every minute seemed to him an hour. When the train at last arrived, his heart was well-nigh bursting with grief at the thought of imparting to Rose the dreadful intelligence of her mother's death.

"How do you do, John ? " said Father Titus, as he stepped from the train. And before John had time to answer, Rose was beside him and asking after the children, and a number of other questions, none of which John heard, as he was thinking about the best way to break the sad news.

Father Titus's guilty conscience took the alarm. John's anxious look frightened him. What if the deceived husband had learned the truth ? He became frightened.

Acting on this suspicion, he placed his hand quickly over John Delaney's mouth, and pushed and urged him toward the carriage.

"Hush, John ! Not a word now. Get into the hack," cried Father Titus, excitedly.

"I did not want to mar the joyousness of this occasion," said John, sorrowfully; but something has happened that will turn it into gloom and sadness."

"Oh, John! What do you mean!" exclaimed Rose, now beginning to realize that her husband had something terrible to communicate.

"If you will promise me to keep calm, I will explain, Rose," said John.

"I promise you, John. For mercy's sake! what is it?"

"Well, then, to be brief about it, if you must know, Rosie, your mother is dead!"

"Dead? oh, John!" cried poor Rose, bursting into tears.

John tried to soothe Rose. He helped her into the carriage, and soon they reached Father Titus's house. The priest bid John and Rose "good-by," and hoped that he would call after supper. The carriage then sped on to Mrs. Ball's house, which being reached the grief of Rose Delaney gave itself vent in the most violent manner. She upbraided herself for having left home at all. If ever there was a conscience-stricken woman for her misdeeds, Rose Delaney was the one that night.

The preparations for the funeral of Mrs. Ball were carried out in a manner that would have become a more wealthy person. Lavish was the display, and the money expended was nearly all of it furnished by Father Titus.

The good old lady was buried, and shortly after forgotten by her own children, but not by John Delaney. He had a monument erected to her memory, and in Mt. Auburn Cemetery she now sleeps the sleep that knows no waking!

CHAPTER XXVI.

MINNIE'S WANDERINGS. — ALONE IN A GREAT CITY.

Madame Chastini's establishment was in a state of confusion and dismay. An hour after Minnie's departure from the house, Dr. Forceps made his appearance, flurried and angry.

"How in the name of common caution did you let the girl go?" he exclaimed, after the madame had related the facts. "You've spoiled the best job we've had for years, Jane Ripley!"

"How was I to help it?" whined the other. "I didn't dare defy the woman that came for her."

The dentist saw the force of this excuse, and made no answer.

"Perhaps we can get hold of her again," he said at last. "If we do, you must put her where she can't again communicate with anybody."

"I'll answer for that!" said the woman, vindictively. "But where can she go to? You told me she hadn't a friend or relation in the city, except young Gildersleeve. Good gracious! Suppose she has got an inkling of who this Frank Gildersleeve is, and has gone to his house?"

"Thunderation!" exclaimed Forceps, springing to his feet as if stunned at the thought. "That *would* play the very deuce all round! Hang it! What if she was playing 'possum the other day when we thought her asleep! We let the cat out of the bag pretty effectually. Could she have overheard what we were saying?"

"What *you* were saying, Dick Forceps, please remember. I didn't have no cat to let out of the bag."

"Yes, confound you, but it was your blasted curiosity that led me to speak of it. But a truce to recrimination; it's no use to cry for spilt milk. We must to work. The girl must be found and brought back, or you and I, Mother Ripley, will have to leave Boston in double-quick time."

While this conversation was taking place, Minnie Marston was groping her way blindly across the Common. How she ever reached that spot, she could not have told. Like one in a dream, she had left the Gildersleeve mansion. The crushing nature of the blow she had received dazed and bewildered her senses. The faculty of continuous thought was no longer hers.

She tottered along, unconscious of her surroundings, seeing no one, yet moving on as if obeying some impelling instinct that still survived the general prostration of her intellect.

Various were the comments of the passers-by on beholding the pretty face and youthful figure of the young girl, reeling and swaying like one intoxicated.

"What a shame!" said an elegantly-dressed lady to another, pausing to look after Minnie. "Poor girl! What could have driven her to such a state?"

"Drunk as a fiddler!" said a rakish-looking young man to his companion. "Say, sis," he whispered, as Minnie passed by, and was about to add some ribald jest, when his better-hearted companion drew him away.

But Minnie was deaf to all these remarks, as she was unconscious of the attention her strange conduct attracted.

"Not his wife! Not his wife!"

The words seemed to float in her brain. They rang again and again in her ears. Her eyes beheld nothing but that terrible scene just passed, — the proud, hard mother; the false and abject wretch whose lying words — Ah! She could not follow out the thought! Ever and forever those words came back to her, —

"Not his wife!" Not his wife!"

"What ails you, my poor child?" said a benevolent-looking old gentleman, trying to detain her, as she was about issuing through the Boylston Street gate of the Common. "You are suffering, my dear. Pray let me assist you."

She stared at him with dazed eyes, shook her head slowly, understanding nothing of what he said or meant, and passed on.

"Not his wife! Not his wife!"

On, still on; whither she knew not and cared not; but growing weaker and weaker now with every step. The dusk had by this time fallen. Lights flashed from the windows.

At last her fictitious strength entirely deserted her. She clutched at the iron railing before a house. For a moment, it seemed as if she were about sinking into utter insensibility. But something rallied her failing faculties. As her eyes fell on the house before her, they encountered a broad expanse of window, ablaze with many-colored lights.

Through the glass was visible a long array of bottles, tier rising on tier, an apothecary's shop. Her eyes wandered from one object to another; now at the rich decorations, the black-walnut and gilded fittings, the marble counters piled with elegant trifles, the glistening scales, the flashing lights and brilliant rainbow hues; at the customers coming and going; the urbane clerks behind the counters, as

they deftly put up little parcels and packages, — watching all with the idle and wondering curiosity of a child. Gradually, it seemed as if some chain of association was being established between all these things and some great want or desire dimly shadowed forth in her mind."

What was it? She struggled desperately to think, — to solve the reason of this mysterious feeling, this strange fascination which held her spellbound, as it were, to the spot.

"Not his wife! Oh, my God! He said I was *not* his wife!"

Suddenly she gave a startled cry. The weight that had lain like an incubus on her brain seemed all at once to be dispersed. The complete, the unspeakable misery of her situation burst upon her.

"Not his wife!"

"Ah! What then? What then?"

Alas! for the poor wretch assailed in his weakest moment by a terrible temptation! Alas! for him, if he be so sunk in despair that the teachings of morality, the higher consolations and warnings of religion — all that he has loved, cherished, venerated — all the lessons of a pure and virtuous life, are as nothing in the presence of a great affliction.

Minnie felt all the agony and utter hopelessness of her fate. Alone in the great city, not a friend to whom she could confide her wrongs, not a soul whom she could trust, acquainted with no one to whom she would dare confide her sad story in the hope of touching a sympathizing heart, — what wonder if her first instinct in that moment of overwhelming trouble, was to seek the last, the only resource that seemed to offer her any escape?

The memory of a favorite book of her father's — "The Vicar of Wakefield" — which he had placed in her hands, and which she had read and re-read with never ending delight, flashed upon her mind.

That book had been her father's parting gift, his warning to her, delicately conveyed. She knew that its wise lessons — drawn from the Book of books, that never-failing source of all goodness and all wisdom — had imparted strength to her character, and fortified her to resist the most ardent persuasions of the man she loved.

But at this terrible crisis of her fate came the thought that the warning had all been in vain. That notwithstanding her own blamelessness, to the world she was no less an outcast than if she had viciously courted and wantonly embraced a deadly sin. That the finger of scorn would be pointed at her, and that, as Mrs. Gildersleeve had intimated, a house of refuge or a reformatory institution was

the only asylum, save a house of shame, that was properly open to her.

Could she ever look her father and her mother in the face again? Would she have courage to tell them her story? Would they believe, in their simple faith, that such wrongs as hers were possible in a civilized, law-abiding community?

And if they could be brought to believe it, how about her friends and neighbors in that distant New Hampshire village? Could she endure the covert sneer, the sly innuendo, the averted look with which friend and neighbor would greet her? Oh, no! no! A thousand times, no! Better, far better, death! And through her mind at the moment floated the plaintive lines of Olivia's song, —

“ When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And learns too late that men betray,
What art can soothe her melancholy,
What charm can wash her guilt away?

“ The only charm her guilt to cover;
To hide her shame from every eye;
To bring repentance to her lover,
To wring his bosom is — to die! ”

The next moment she was standing, pale, trembling, but determined, before the counter of the drug-store. She laid a piece of money on the marble.

“ A quarter's worth of laudanum,” she said to the clerk.

In vain she tried to steady her voice, and speak in common-place, or at least unfaltering, accents. The clerk detected her agitation, saw the strange glitter of her eye, and the drawn and haggard look on her lovely countenance.

Slowly he shook his head.

“ I am sorry, miss,” he said, “ but I cannot sell laudanum, or any other deadly drug, to *you*, without a physician's prescription.”

The meaning look, the significant emphasis, told the young girl that her desperate purpose was suspected. Without a word, she turned away. But she did not falter in that purpose. Failure in this one attempt did not imply failure in other efforts. She would try another place. She would repeat the words over and over again, until she could speak them without a tremor. Desperation even sharpened her wits and taught her the necessity of deceit. So that entering a small and untidy apothecary's shop, she made known her wants in a manner which this time awakened neither suspicion nor scruples.

Concealing her fatal purchase, Minnie hastened once more along the darkened streets; but now that she had gained the end for which she had roused her drooping energies, now that she felt her fate rested in her own hands, her strength once more deserted her; her tottering limbs refused to support her. She felt a dull, throbbing pain in her head; she threw out her arms, clutched at the empty air, and, with a low moaning cry, fell insensible upon the pavement! When she awoke to consciousness, she found herself again a prisoner in the house of Madame Ripley.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FIRST SUSPICIONS. — SHADOWS ON THE CURTAIN.

"Rose, my dear," said John Delaney to his wife, soon after her return from New York, "what ails you to-day? Something troubles you, I fear."

"Oh, no, John," said Rose, hesitatingly.

"You look so strange, my dear. You have something on your mind, I know. Come, tell me what it is; that's a dear."

And John fondly stroked Rose's pretty head.

But Rose still hesitated.

"I — I don't like to tell you, John."

John was getting interested by this time.

"Do not act so, Rosie. Surely you do not fear to confide in your husband, — one who loves you so dearly as I do?"

"Well, John, I — I went to confession to Father Milton to-day."

"Well?"

"I do not think I shall ever go to confession to him again."

"Ah? And why not? Father Milton is an excellent man."

"He may be; — but — but he asked me such strange questions."

"Strange questions? Nothing, I hope, that a good and modest woman would object to hear, Rose?"

"Yes, they were. Oh! John, if I had been a young, unmarried girl, I should have been really frightened at what he said."

John Delaney rose to his feet, a startled look coming into his face.

"As it was," continued Rose, with downcast eyes, "I was so ashamed that I was glad enough to get out of the confessional."

"Rose," said John, sternly, "I want you to tell me exactly what Father Milton said and did."

"Well, I will tell you, John. After the usual questions, he began to ask me about our domestic affairs; if we lived happily together; if you were a kind and tender husband; if I had always been faithful to you, and if you were always faithful to me."

"Go on, Rose," said John, as his wife paused.

"Then — then —"

But here Rose broke down completely. John resumed his seat, and putting his arm tenderly around her he sought to soothe and calm her by endearing words.

"There, there, Rosie my pet!" he said, "pray be calm. I do not blame you, my dear, because this priest shocked your modesty. It was not your fault. The holy fathers are sometimes rather plain-spoken, to be sure. But they never mean any harm."

"I don't know about that, John. A priest is a man after all. And when a man talks to a woman as Father Milton talked to me, and eyed me, and smiled at me, I begin to suspect him."

"But tell me what he said," persisted John.

Rose nestled up closer to her husband, and after much persuasion, whispered the desired communication in his ear. As she concluded, John sprang up and began to pace the floor with agitated steps.

"Did he dare touch you! Did he dare make you any improper proposals?" he cried.

"No, John. But his eyes spoke a language that was plain enough."

"If anybody but you, Rose, had told me of this, I would not believe it. I have been brought up at the altar. Have been taught to believe that our priests are above the sinful feelings of common mortals. That they are pure as the saints. Oh! I cannot believe Father Milton meant any harm. He cannot be such a wolf in sheep's clothing! You must be mistaken in your surmises, Rosie."

"No, I am not," said Rose. "I am sure that I am right. Besides, why did he ask such pointed questions about my relations with Father Titus? If he had not intended to debase my mind, he would never have suggested such things. You know he has more young girls at his confessional than any other priest. And I noticed as the prettiest girls came out, they seemed embarrassed and their faces were crimson."

John, much disturbed by his thoughts, was still walking up and down the room. He was the most unsuspecting of men. Kind and affectionate by disposition, and never imagining evil of anybody. And yet something in his wife's words or manner awoke an uneasy feeling in his breast. He could not define it, however. He only knew that for the first time since their marriage, some dark and ominous shadow seemed to be threatening his domestic peace and happiness.

His face colored as he turned to Rose. It smote her with a sense of dread and coming danger, it was so full of gloomy sternness.

"Rose," said he, "you make me suspicious of these priests. If *one* dares go to such extremes, others, too, will do so. Can it be that ministers of our holy church will prostitute their high calling to such base, such villanous ends? Your words have aroused strange thoughts within me. Even Father Titus — But no! No! He has ever been my true friend and yours. No! I will not wrong that good priest! Though all others prove false, I would take my oath that Father Titus is as pure as the angels."

Rose trembled like an aspen at this. In vain she tried to control her agitation. John gave her a quick, startled look.

Heaven help the unsuspecting man when once his suspicions are awakened! There is no torture equal to that he suffers. "Trifles light as air" become "confirmations strong as proofs of Holy Writ." So was it with John Delaney at this moment. Rose's emotion struck a pang sharp as an adder's tooth to his heart.

"Oh!" he cried in his agony, "have I been deceived? Have I cherished a serpent in my bosom all these years? Have I been the dupe of a designing priest?"

He beat his clinched hand against his brow.

The danger brought Rose Delaney to her senses. She must mask her feelings and calm John's suspicions or she would be lost, utterly ruined.

"Oh! John, my dear husband! What are you talking about?" she exclaimed, rising and clinging to his arm, his eyes filling with tears; for despite her artless, childish ways, Rose was a consummate actress. "You do not mean a word you say! How can you talk so? Am I not your dear little wife, who loves you better than anything else in this world?"

She threw her arms around his neck, and looked so tearfully up into his face that, in spite of himself, John was softened.

Rose continued, —

"How could you speak so of good Father Titus, John? Think how kind he has been to you and to me. Think of the privileges he gives you. Think of the presents he is continually giving me, all out of regard for you, John, dear."

"Ah!" said John, his suspicions again awakened as he suddenly recalled one or two things which had happened between the priest and Rose. "I saw Father Titus holding your hand, Rose, the other day, in a very tender manner. I remember, now, how closely you sat together, too. His foot touched yours in a very loving way more than once. Those glances you exchanged I thought were merely the fond looks of a father to a daughter! Oh! heavens and earth! I shall go crazy with these thoughts!"

"Oh! John, how can you!" cried Rose, whimpering. "I declare you ought to be ashamed of yourself to cast such aspersions on your little wife. You know I have been always as true and faithful as woman could be. You don't deserve to be loved as I have loved you!"

And Rose fell to crying in downright earnest.

Now, there was one thing which the good-hearted John Delaney could not stand. That was distress in man or woman.

Harder still was it for him to see a woman in tears. Harder than all, when that woman was his pretty, childish, dearly beloved wife.

Rose played her points well.

She knew John's weakness.

She cried louder and louder.

It seemed as if her heart was about to burst.

John looked at her sheepishly. He wanted to tell her that he was a brute, an unfeeling monster; that he did not mean a word he had uttered.

He longed to do this, but he felt too much ashamed of himself.

"Boo — hoo!" sobbed Rose. "I nev — never th — thought you — you would be so cru — cruel, John Delaney! There now! You — you ought to be ashamed of your — yourself, so you had!"

"Don't, Rosie, dear!" said John, almost crying himself. "Don't cry; please don't. You make me feel bad."

"To g — go and suspect your — your true little wife, and dear good Father Titus, too! It's shameful! Oh! dear! I wish I was dead!"

And the floodgates of Rose's sorrowful heart were opened afresh.

This was altogether too much for soft-hearted John. In a moment more he had rushed to Rose, caught her in his arms, and was frantically kissing away her swiftly-flowing tears.

These tears accomplished more than volumes of protestations could have done. They completely washed away every trace of John Delaney's suspicions.

"Come, Rose," said John that evening, peace having been fully restored between them, "let us go over and see my father. He is very low to-night. The doctors say he may not live till morning."

In a few moments the pair were ready and sallied out to go to the house of John's parents.

Passing Father Titus's parsonage, they saw the priest at the door, who pressed them to come in for a brief call. Where are you going, my children?" said the priest.

John told him.

"Is your father, then, so very ill?" asked Father Titus. "I am sorry for you, John. But in that case I will not detain you from pursuing such a filial duty."

"We will call some other time," said John.

"Do so, please, and bring Rose with you, too. Why, you look tired and sick, my dear child," said Father Titus paternally to Rose, giving her a significant glance which John did not see.

"Yes, I do not feel well, Father," said Rose, faintly.

"Perhaps you had better let your wife rest here, John, until you return," said Father Titus.

"Certainly, if she feels too tired to go on," returned John, looking at Rose's pale face.

So saying, the husband took his departure. Once outside the door, he happened to glance up at the lighted windows of Father Titus's study.

There, sharply outlined upon the curtains, he saw a sight that struck him like a death-stroke. The *silhouette* of two figures, — their arms intertwined, their heads pressed closely together, their lips meeting!

With a groan of mingled astonishment, anguish, and terror, John Delaney recognized in those shadows the figures of his wife and Father Titus!

Staggering like a drunken man at this crushing disclosure, to save himself from falling, the stricken husband clutched wildly at the iron railing before the house.

How long he clung there he knew not. He was as one paralyzed ; every hope, every feeling, every faculty crushed beneath this terrible, this overwhelming blow ! All thoughts of his dying father were banished from his mind. In that moment of supreme anguish his mind could hold but one terrible idea.

"My wife ! *my* idolized Rose ! Oh ! she is *false* ! she is FALSE !"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROSE'S CONFESSION. — A HUSBAND'S TERRIBLE GRIEF.

It was late into the night when John Delaney returned to his home, — a home, alas ! to him no longer !

Rose met him at the door.

Her husband's pale face, his blood-hot eyes, his stern, hopeless look, awed and alarmed the faithless wife.

Without a word he pushed rudely by her, entered the sitting-room, and dropped heavily into a chair.

A groan of bitter agony burst from his lips.

Rose had silently followed him.

"What is it, dear John ?" she said, as she crept close beside him. "Your father —"

"Is dead !" said John, solemnly.

"Oh dear ! I am so sorry, John ! Oh ! why didn't I go with you ! It is too bad ! But I felt so tired and sick."

"How long have you been home, Rose ?" asked John.

What a strange chill there was in his voice ! Rose trembled, a vague feeling of fear creeping upon her.

"Oh ! ever so long, dear John," she replied, looking apprehensively at him. "But I couldn't go to bed until you came back."

"You need not have waited up for *me*," answered John, hoarsely, and in the same frigid tones. "Father Titus came home with you, I suppose ?"

"Yes."

John Delaney said no more for a moment. He leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands over his face. His form was convulsed with some strong emotion. No sound, however, issued from his lips.

"Dear John," said Rose, mistaking his agitation, "believe me,

I deeply sympathize with you in your grief. Oh! I know what it is to lose a loved parent. I can never forget my dear mother's sudden death."

John suddenly dropped his hands from before his face and looked searchingly into her countenance.

"Oh!" he murmured to himself, "so fair and yet so false!"

"What is the matter with you, John?" said Rose, startled at his unnatural manner and harsh tone.

Instead of replying, John arose and approached her.

"Come up stairs with me, Rose," he said, going to the door. Wonderingly she obeyed, following him to the second story, and entering with him the room where the children slept.

"Look at our children, Rose," he said, pointing to the babes, a mournful cadence inexpressibly touching in the tones of his voice. "There they sleep the sweet sleep of peace and innocence. Rose! Rose!" he cried, with a sudden burst of emotion, and wringing his hands wildly, "can you see these dear little babes, can you take them in your arms without reproach to your heart? Can you endure to hear them lisp the name 'mother' and not wish the very earth to open and hide you?"

"What do you mean, John?" faltered the guilty wife and mother, pale with fright.

"Mean! I mean that you are a false, a vile, a perjured woman!" cried John, excitedly.

"Oh, John! You are suspicious again. I thought after what occurred this morning, that you would never say such things to me again. You told me you would not."

"I was a fool. I believed your artful words, your cunning acting. Since then I have had a revelation."

She cringed away from him at these words as if he had struck her.

"A revelation?" she gasped.

"Yes, and a pretty one to come to a husband! Nay! do not try any of your blandishments upon me. It would be useless. My eyes are opened at last. Wretched woman, there is nothing left for you but to confess! Ay! down on your knees, here in the presence of these innocent children, of your wronged and outraged husband! Confess, I say, how you have disgraced *them*, how you have deceived and deluded *me*!"

Without a word the guilty wife fell upon her knees at his feet. The vague presentiment she had felt was at length realized. She

believed her husband did indeed know the full extent of her crime. For the first time the enormity of that crime was presented to her soul. She had dishonored her children! Terrible thought! The scales fall from her eyes. She, too, had been deluded, deceived.

Father Titus's sophistry had blinded her. Working on a weak and frivolous nature, he had sapped the foundation of her virtue; had taught and convinced her by insidious arts that there could be no sin committed with a priest of the holy Church of Rome.

To cover his crime he had bound his victim by the most fearful oaths never to confess her sin neither to her husband nor to any other confessor in the church.

But now, removed from the magnetism of her paramour's eye, from the infectious influence of his gross nature and honeyed speech, away from the dread and terrors of his anathema, the miserable dupe opened her soul to her husband, revealing all its burden of wrong and guilt and shame.

"Ah!" said John Delaney, "now I see the reason of Father Titus's kindness to me! Fool that I was, never to suspect! Tell me, how did this scoundrel make his first approaches?"

"At the confessional," was the trembling answer. "He asked me all sorts of questions similar to those I told you Father Milton did."

"How long has this been going on?"

"For two years," gasped Rose, sobbing aloud.

John made a movement as if he would strike her, but restrained himself, murmuring, —

"No! No! Let me not forget myself! I am to blame, also. I induced her to join the church! Gave her no peace for a year. Instilled into her mind the specious dogmas of my religion. Led her like a poor, foolish fly, into the spider's web. Oh! my God! All this sin and misery I have brought upon myself! Not upon this poor dupe, but upon the arch villain who has wrecked my happiness shall my indignation fall!"

Then to Rose he said, —

"You have been in the habit of going to the priest's house without my knowledge?"

"Yes, John," faltered Rose. "He — warned me not to tell you that I called upon him so frequently."

"Ha! The deep-dyed scoundrel! Well, go on, tell me how he paved the way to your destruction — and to his own also! For as sure as there is a God of justice, this black-hearted crime shall be the utter and everlasting destruction of Father Titus!"

"He was always inviting me to his house," Rose replied through her sobs. "And during the early part of our acquaintance, he would occasionally use some little familiarities and drop words that would surprise me."

"What were those words?"

"Oh! sometimes he would call me his little darling. Then he would say, 'Oh, Rosie! if you only knew how much I love you!' at the same time patting my cheek or toying with my hair."

"The villain!"

"Then, as if recollecting himself, he would try and turn it off, call me his dear pupil or his pet child, and give me presents of money or jewelry. I — I always told you of those presents, John. I never thought that there was any harm in it all," said Rose, simply.

"I see! He laid his cunning snares until the time was ripe for the poor fly to fall into the meshes."

"Oh! I cannot bear to think of it!" continued the penitent woman. It was almost insensibly that I at last yielded to his unholy wishes. I was not myself, John. He had induced me to take some wine with him. The fumes of the liquor excited me. No! no! John, I was not in my right senses! I know I was not! After that first step, the rest became easy. I demurred for a time; but he made me believe that it was perfectly right. Assured me that heaven had specially thus provided for its priests, because they were not permitted to marry. That I only obeyed a divine instinct, and that my submission would contribute to my happiness here and to my glory hereafter!"

John Delaney could hardly contain himself as these specious and sacrilegious arguments of the priest were divulged. If Father Titus's evil genius had led him at that moment to John Delaney's house, he would have rushed most surely upon his fate.

"Tell me no more!" cried the infuriated husband. "Oh! Father in Heaven! Can it be possible that any of Thy consecrated servants are so black as this destroyer of my happiness and my home!"

"Oh! say that you forgive me, John!" cried Rose, beseechingly. "I will never prove false to you again! I will be all that a devoted wife can be! For our children's sake, dear John, do not expose me! Take me once more to your heart! For oh! dear John, I swear that I have never ceased to love you!"

"I will make no promises," said John Delaney, sadly. "I pledge myself to nothing. But as for Father Titus —"

He did not finish the sentence, but turned hurriedly toward the door.

"Where are you going? Oh! John! what do you intend to do?" shrieked Rose, frightened at his stern set look."

But without another word, John Delaney seized his hat and cane, and rushed out into the darkness of the night!

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE FARM.—MINNIE'S COUNTRY HOME.

The Connecticut River—the pride and glory of New England—affords in its entire length one of the most charming and diversified panoramas of natural scenery in the world.

Journeying from its mouth northward, the traveller passes through a succession of thriving towns and villages, highly-cultivated farms, rich expanses of meadow, with now and then, on either side, a rounded hill or towering eminence clothed with verdure to the very summit top. Reaching the vicinity of its head-waters, the character of the landscape changes, and a scene of almost Alpine grandeur and sublimity bursts upon the view.

It is a region of mountains wild and rugged, of fearful precipices, beetling crags, overhanging rocks, dashing cascades and deeply wooded glens and defiles, with here and there a verdant meadow or smiling plain set like a gem amid the surrounding desolation.

Not far from Connecticut Lake—the source of the noble river—and forming an outlying spur of the White Mountains, is the celebrated Dixville Notch.

The notch is a singularly wild mountain-pass, with precipitous sides and fantastic craggy pinnacles, one of which, called Table Rock, rises a sheer height of eight hundred feet, and looks, in its lofty grandeur, like a sentinel of time, hoary and grim, keeping perpetual watch and ward over the surrounding country.

It was in this far-away spot that Minnie Marston was born. Her father's house nestled in one of those little valleys we have mentioned, and almost under the shadow of Table Rock.

Mr. Marston had been in his younger days a country preacher, but of late years ill-health and growing infirmities had compelled

him to withdraw from the regular labors of a clergyman's life, and he now gave most of his attention to cultivating the few acres which he called his farm.

Such as it was, the farm was his sole source of support; and in a region so unfriendly to the processes of agriculture as that of Northern New Hampshire, it was no easy task for Minnie's father to make both ends meet. He labored, too, under the added disadvantage of being lame, having injured a limb by a fall, and was compelled to employ hired help much of the time.

John Marston was a man of sterling worth, and highly respected by his friends and neighbors. His wife was a worthy and cheerful helpmeet, accepting all the crosses of their lot with a meek and uncomplaining spirit, and ably seconded her husband in his duties and cares.

It was a sad parting which the aged couple underwent when Minnie left them. The young girl was their only child and idolized accordingly. She was ambitious and energetic. The narrow life she was compelled to lead was too circumscribed for her energies. She burned to enlarge the sphere of her usefulness; to be doing something for her parents; to lend them substantial help in their daily struggle with poverty.

Like many a country girl in similar circumstances, Minnie turned a longing eye toward the city, vaguely imagining that in that region of ceaseless bustle and tireless industry she could easily glide into some situation where a willing mind and active hands would meet with a stipend sufficient for her own wants and enable her to contribute to the support of her parents.

This idea long occupied her thoughts and formed the subject of her secret hopes. At last she prevailed upon her father and mother to permit her to answer an advertisement which she saw in a Boston newspaper, and when a favorable and unexpected reply was returned to her application for the situation advertised, she wrung from them a reluctant consent to her accepting it.

Every week brought a letter to the anxious father and mother from Minnie, and gradually they became in a measure reconciled to the idea of her absence. At length, however, the tone of her letters seemed to undergo a change. They no longer breathed the same happy and cheerful spirit of content. The anxious mother's heart was the first to take the alarm.

"Oh, John," she said to her husband one day, "I fear our poor girl is working too hard, or that she has some source of care that she keeps from us. I am almost worried to death about her!"

Her husband was astonished at this announcement. Minnie's letters had conveyed no such sinister impression to him. But as each succeeding missive grew more and more despondent, at last John Marston fully shared his wife's apprehensions.

But the letters grew few and far between. The poor mother's face became thinner and thinner every day. The old father's step grew slower and heavier, and his head drooped, and a smile was rarely seen now upon his lips.

The nearest post-office to the Marston farm was some twelve miles distant. Once a week it was Mr. Marston's custom to drive over to the town to get his mail and do such trading as his limited means permitted. He returned one day from his weekly trip, and his looks at once betrayed that he had for the third time brought no letter from Minnie.

"Oh! John! What does it mean?" cried Mrs. Marston, bursting into tears. "Something has happened to Minnie! Oh! She is sick; she *must* be sick, or she would not neglect to write! Oh! my child! my child!"

"Don't take on like that, mother," said her husband, soothingly, although he felt all her apprehensions himself. "She has neglected to write for some just reason, rest assured. She will write soon. Perhaps there is a letter on the way now. I shall go to town again the first thing in the morning.

But no letter awaited John Marston at the post-office the next day, nor the next.

"Oh! What shall we do? What shall we do?" mourned the poor mother. "This suspense will kill me, John!"

"Now pray be calm, mother," said her husband, himself nearly distracted with apprehensions. "I have thought of something that I should have done before. I will go to town once more to-morrow, and if this time there is still no letter, I will telegraph to Boston and learn the cause of our girl's strange silence."

"That never occurred to me," said Mrs. Marston. "Why did we not think of it at first? Oh! It doesn't seem as if I could wait for so long a time! But will you be likely to get an answer the same day, John?"

"Undoubtedly. I shall wait for it until it does come, you may be sure."

"And who will you telegraph to, John?"

"Why, to Minnie's boarding house, where we direct her letters, of course. Now cheer up, mother. It is like enough that our dear

girl may be down with some trifling sickness, and hasn't felt like writing; or, if she has been unable to go to her work for a short time, of course she would be unable to send the money to you as usual, and so, for fear of disappointing you, chose to wait a few days."

"Oh! if I could only hope it was nothing worse!" sighed the poor mother.

The ensuing day Mr. Marston, for the fourth time that week, applied in vain for the expected letter at the post-office. The next step was to send his telegram to Minnie's boarding-house mistress. He waited for hours before the answer came, and when he read it a groan burst from his lips.

The despatch was as follows:—

TO JOHN MARSTON, Esq.

Miss Marston left my house three days ago with a young gentleman who has been waiting on her. Have heard nothing from her since and don't know the name of her fellow. Perhaps she'll come back all right. Can tell you nothing further.

SOPHIA WILKINS.

"Perhaps she'll come back all right!"

John Marston repeated those terrible words over to himself again and again on the ride homeward. The very doubt expressed by them awoke a dreadful and nameless fear in his breast. How could he communicate this terrible intelligence to his wife? How read this cruel message to that anxious mother?

He was driving at the moment through the dark and narrow gorge of the Notch. Table Rock was before him, its tall, steep column looming far up into the sky, and seeming—as it ever seems—about to topple over into the contracted roadway, and heap with ruins all that lay beneath.

A shudder ran through his blood as he gazed up and along the precipitous shaft, as if some awful and harrowing memory was evoked at its sight; and then a sudden thought, like an inspiration, flashed upon his mind, and a calm and joyous smile, peaceful and happy as the smile on the face of a child, usurped the look of pain and anguish which had furrowed his brow.

It was with this look that he greeted his wife as he entered their humble home.

"Oh! You have got news, John!" she cried, at the sight of his face. "Good news at last!"

He checked her hopes as he shook his head.

"No, wife, I have received only this telegram. Minnie is away on her vacation, but will probably return soon, and then write us as usual," said John Marston, handing the dispatch to his wife, and endeavoring to hide from her his forebodings.

Mrs. Marston read the telegram.

"Oh, John!" she cried, sorrowfully, "I fear all is not right with Minnie! I am afraid —"

"Oh, wife!" said John, fervidly. "Let us hope and pray our dear Minnie is safe and in good hands!"

"But why did you deceive me with that happy look, John?" said Mrs. Marston. "I thought surely you had good news. How could you smile while our hearts are still so anxious for our darling child?" she asked, reproachfully.

For answer, John Marston placed his hand affectionately upon her arm and drew her toward the window.

The sunset glow still lingered in the west, tipping the jagged and fantastic peaks into which the line of mountains was broken with glittering gold.

"See Table Rock, mother!" said Mr. Marston, in a low voice, pointing toward the giant pinnacle whose shadow was projected far out across the valley. Do you remember when we went there to the picnic that was given for the benefit of the city strangers who were here two years ago?"

"Certainly I do, John, and Minnie went also."

"Of course you recollect it, mother. As if either you or I could forget that day! You know we lost sight of our darling, thinking she was with the rest of the Sunday-school children. Ah! I can recall it all now as if it happened but yesterday! Caleb Snow came up to me and says he, —

"John Marston, I wouldn't let a child of mine take such a risk!" — "What risk?" I demanded. "Why, going up the Rock," he replied. "Going up the Rock?" I repeated in my bewilderment. "What Rock?" — "Why, Table Rock, to be sure," he answered. "And who is so insane as to attempt such a thing?" I asked. "Why, I've been telling you this five minutes," said Caleb. "Your daughter Minnie! See!" he cried, pointing up the Rock, and at the same moment such a cheer went up from the people clustered in the road as I never heard before, — "see! There she is, at the very top!"

"I thought I should drop to the earth, mother. My heart ceased to beat! Thank God, *you* knew nothing about it till all was

over! I looked up to the top of the dizzy height. Yes, mother, there, a speck outlined against the sky, and waving her bright red scarf, stood our Minnie! I shut my eyes in my terror, and when I opened them again she was gone. 'Great heavens!' I cried, 'she has fallen!'

"But no, she had only commenced to descend. I ran to the foot of the rock, and knelt right down there and prayed as I never prayed before. I asked God in His mercy to protect my only child in that perilous descent, worse, more dangerous a hundred-fold even than the ascent. I pleaded and besought for my darling's life. I promised, oh! I know not what I did not promise in the wild agony of those few moments, if my little girl would only be spared to me. I saw her slowly descending, now in sight, now lost to view. I shut my eyes, for I dared not look. 'Ha! she has slipped!' I heard some one cry. 'Now she is on her feet again!' came another voice. 'Bravo! Bravo!' shouted the city ladies and gentlemen, and clapped their hands to encourage her, as they told me afterward. Then there came one breathless moment, and the child bounded as light and free as an antelope from the base of the rock to the solid ground. God had heard my prayer! He had saved our child!

"Ah! I see her now as she looked at that moment,—with the flush of health and excitement on her cheeks, her eyes sparkling and gleaming, her head thrown back, her bosom heaving! I caught her to my breast, and made her promise then and there never again to repeat that terrible feat. Ah! How they cheered her! How those rich city people gathered round her, and petted her, and called her a heroine, and praised her matchless courage!

"Not one among them all — man nor woman — dared do what our Minnie did! And it was done so unconsciously, they all said; not at all from a spirit of vanity or braggadocio. No, indeed. Her life had been spent among these rugged mountains. Every cliff and cranny was familiar to her feet. But until that moment, mother, neither you nor I knew that she had ever before climbed to the summit of Table Rock."

"And heaven be praised that we learned of it in time, John," said Mrs. Marston. "We should have curbed Minnie's venturesome spirit before. It was this same high courage and disregard of danger that impelled her to go to the city. She saw how hard was our daily struggle to get along, and like the noble, self-sacrificing girl that she is, she determined to take a part of the burden on her young shoulders. But oh! my darling! my darling! I fear I shall never see you again! Oh! John! John! Why did we ever part

from our poor lamb! Why did we ever let her go alone to that dreadful city!"

And the stricken mother burst into a paroxysm of sobs and tears.

"Hush, mother!" said the aged father, solemnly. "It is sinful to give way to such a tempest of grief. Listen to me. It was from no idle vanity that I have recalled that trying scene. The memory of God's goodness to us at that time, came like a benediction to my soul to-day when I too was ready to give way to despondency. Let us trust in the Lord. We have long since confided our darling to His care. He who protected her in her hour of deadliest peril, He who answered my prayer, and brought our little girl safe and sound out of the very jaws of death, will shield her amidst all the perils and temptations which now encompass her. In Him let us trust: praise be to His holy name!"

And then the old man knelt down and raised his voice in a fervent petition for his child.

"And now, mother," he said afterwards, "I cannot suffer any longer this suspense about Minnie. I am resolved to go in search of her."

"You, John!" exclaimed Mrs. Marston, in utter surprise.

"Yes. It is true I am ignorant of the dark and crooked ways of the great city, but my purpose will sustain me. I will see Abner Stowell and get him to see after the farm while I am away."

"But the expense, John?" said the wife.

"I have thought of everything, mother. We must stop at no sacrifice, now. Our child's future welfare may depend upon my exertions. I will hesitate at no obstacle that would prevent what I think and believe is now my sacred duty? I have already made arrangements to mortgage our little property, and shall sell the cow. It will be hard to part with poor old Dolly, but we must crush all such feelings and think and feel only for our Minnie."

"And your lameness, my poor husband?"

"Not even that shall deter me. My child calls to me for help. I can limp many a mile without heeding fatigue if my steps only at last may lead to her. The Lord will raise me up friends, I have no fear. I have prayed for light and I believe it has been vouchsafed me. To-morrow I start on my search for our child!"

"And I, John, shall go with you. I can never rest content here alone," said the mother resolutely.

And the morning light saw John Marston and his wife on their way to the Great City.

CHAPTER XXX.

DRIVEN TO DESPAIR. — MINNIE TAKES THE FATAL DRAUGHT.

Jane Ripley, otherwise known as "Madame Chastini," was sitting in her private sitting-room, alone with her own thoughts, and they were apparently not of a very agreeable nature.

"I declare," she was saying to herself, "the luck is runnin' dead against me and no mistake. I've had no end of troubles this year. And here when I thought I'd fallen on to a good thing, — I mean this Marston gal, — she ups and slopes. And now I s'pose I'll lose my pay for all the trouble she's caused me. Then there's that Sadie Burns. She's goin' to die on my hands, and there'll be all that expense for nuthin'!"

But the door-bell ringing at that moment cut short the woman's cogitations. She sprang up with alacrity.

"I do hope it's Forceps. Perhaps he has been in luck and found the gal. I'd give fifty dollars if it was so."

But Mother Ripley was mistaken. It was not Forceps, but Dr. Ring, a physician regularly employed by her to look after the inmates of her establishment.

"How is the patient, madame?" he inquired on entering.

"I dunno, doctor. But walk right up. You know her room. Excuse me from accompanying you as I am expecting Dr. Forceps every minute."

The medical man bowed and ascended the stairs, while Mother Ripley returned to her apartment, and once more fell into her previous train of reflection. It was not long after that she heard a carriage stop before the house and then came a furious ring at the door.

She flew to open it, and encountered Dick Forceps. His face denoted tidings of some sort, whether good or bad she could not tell. His words soon reassured her.

"I've got her!" he whispered. "But she's in a dead faint! It's ail right, however, I think. But come and lend a hand. We'll take her up to her old room. Send one of the girls over for Dr. Ring."

"He's up stairs, now," said the woman.

"That's lucky. But come along. We must get her in quietly before she comes to."

In a moment more the insensible form of Minnie Marston was lifted out of the carriage and conveyed to the house.

"Where did you find her, Dick?" asked Mother Ripley, after they had placed the young girl on the bed in the room she had before occupied.

"Not a half mile from here. I saw a woman fall, and rushed across the street to her. It was Minnie. There were only two or three persons round. I called a hack and in no time had her in it."

Dr. Ring at this moment entered. He soon quieted the apprehensions regarding Minnie.

"She is weak and ill, and I should judge had undergone some powerful mental shock. But there's nothing to be alarmed at. She will soon come round."

He administered some restoratives.

How long Minnie lay in her death-like swoon she knew not. When she awoke she found herself in her old room and alone. How did she come there, she wondered? Was it all a dream? But no. Her flight, her interview with Mrs. Gildersleeve and Frank, her subsequent wanderings through the streets, — all came back to her with a vividness which told her they were no fantasy.

Suddenly she started to a sitting position as she heard a movement in the adjoining room. Her bed was close against the wall, and the partition was a thin and flimsy one.

Now there came a series of low groans, which ended in a piercing shriek.

Poor Minnie's heart almost ceased to beat, so great was her fright and terror. Fearful thoughts crowded upon her brain. All that she had suffered was as nought to the images of horror which these sinister sounds pictured to her imagination.

What was this house to which she had been lured? But while she asked this question, and before she could pursue the thought further, she heard a low voice begin to speak in the next room. She listened with suspended breath to what followed.

"Hist!" said the voice. "The operation is a failure! Nothing more can be done! The girl is doomed!"

"What! Won't she live it out?"

"No. There's no hope for her."

"Er — what shall we do with the body?"

"Oh! that's easily seen to," came the careless reply. "I've disposed of scores of unsuccessful cases, and never got caught yet."

"But supposing you should this time?" said the questioning voice in hoarse tones.

"Pshaw! I'm in with the police. They'd see me clear. Never fear. There's no danger."

Presently Minnie heard a pitiful voice, apparently that of a young girl, speaking in faint and mournful tones,—

"Oh! shall I never recover, shall I never recover! Oh! give me hope, some hope of life!"

"No, you're done for!" replied a brutal voice. "So stop your howling."

"Oh, my God!" wailed the girl. "Must I die! *Must* I die! Oh! I am not fit to die! Oh! save me! save me! Father! mother! shall I never see you again! Never have your soft hands upon my brow and hear your blessing on your child, your lost and sinful child! Oh! God! my fate is hard, too hard for one of thy children!" And the poor girl groaned aloud in mortal agony.

"Stop yer noise!" commanded a stern woman's voice.

"Oh! save me! save me! do not let me die!" cried the girl wildly. "Oh! will nothing soften your hard hearts! Will no pity, no tenderness steal across your souls and plead for me? Oh! God! I cannot—I cannot die! Oh! Forgive my sin! forgive my sin! and let me live!"

And sobbing in the depths of woe and despair, the poor girl burst into loud wails of lament.

"Girl! hush yer noise!" cried the woman. "You'll disturb the house with your foolish crying."

"Oh! shall I die! must I, must I die! oh, will nothing save me! Oh, George! why did you bring me here! Oh! you've killed me! you've killed me! Oh! God and the angels bear witness, you have killed me!"

Minutes went by, terrible minutes to the mute and shuddering listener. Then again she heard the man's voice.

"It's all over," he said. "Now how shall we dispose of her?"

"There is but one way," came the woman's voice, in surly accents. You know your old trunk on the shed. Well, take that, shove her in it, and carry it to Broadway Bridge. Dump it over and it'll never be heard of again. Be sure yer put in plenty of ballast, so it'll sink, mind you!"

"All right," replied the man. "I'll do it."

And he went out of the room, the frightened bride hearing him shut the door and tramp up stairs. She shuddered in fear, but he did not try her door, but she heard his footsteps on the shed, and sounds as if he were moving a trunk from its place.

By and by a noise on the landing below attracted Minnie's attention.

She was impelled to open her door and noiselessly lean over the banisters. She heard voices below.

Mother Ripley and a gentleman were in conversation. The former was speaking in indignant tones

"I declare," she exclaimed, "if it isn't a downright shame! There isn't a woman in the business that has such luck as me! She's the sixth within a year that's turned sick on my hands.

"It *is* hard luck," said the gentleman.

"Well, doctor, tell me honestly, what do you think of Sadie's chances?"

"I think the chances are that she will die."

"Then she must go!"

"Can't she pay her board?"

"No, she can't. She ain't got a cent in the world. I'm not going to keep her here for nothing."

"But where is she to go?"

"I don't care where she goes! I can't be troubled with her."

"But wouldn't it be a fair return for you to take care of her, now that she can't take care of herself?"

"Stuff! Don't preach, man. I keep no house of the Good Shepherd, nor a charity hospital. Business is business. I've got my rent to pay and I won't have any drones in my hive. No, she must go!" repeated the woman.

"Come, now, Mrs. Ripley, you can afford to give her a decent burial, if, as you say, she has paid you well."

"You talk like a fool, doctor. Haven't I a license to pay? Haven't I to keep the eyes of the police closed?"

"I was not aware that you paid a license."

"Well, I pay indirectly, perhaps, a heavy license; more than you would imagine. The police officers must be protected, you know. They must make a show of doing something now and then. And speaking of the police officers, I must say they are the best set of men that ever lived. They have hearts, they have. They won't crowd us, they won't, if they are treated right. A five-dollar bill goes a long way. Still, you can't give five-dollar bills if you don't make 'em. Therefore, as I said before, this girl must git — as good as her has had to git before this."

"She says, if she has to go away from here, she wants to go to the City Hospital," said the man.

"If she wants to go to the City Hospital, let her give me permission to pawn her things, and raise some money for her to pay the expenses."

"A good idea," said the doctor. "She won't need her dresses any more. She is too ill to give any directions. You go and dispose of her dresses and give me twenty-five, and I will get her into the hospital."

A moment later Minnie heard the front door close, and then all was silent.

It would be vain to attempt to describe Minnie's feelings as she listened to the foregoing. She had recognized Madame Chastini's voice in one of the speakers, and she fancied the other's was none other than that of Dr. Ring.

All doubts as to the character of the house were removed. She was literally caught in the toils. No ray of hope was left to cheer her. The sun of her life had suddenly set; all, all was darkness!

She was sick unto death. Her head was splitting with pain. Her thoughts were a chaos.

"Lost! lost! lost!" she moaned.

"Betrayed, ruined, and brought to this terrible house. Who will ever believe, knowing that I have been the inmate of such a place, but that I am as bad as those who come here voluntarily? Oh! Frank Gildersleeve! Heaven will exact a terrible vengeance for this!"

Her brain was whirling. She was almost bereft of reason. Suddenly she remembered the events of the previous night,—of her visit to Mrs. Gildersleeve, and Frank's denial of their marriage. She started up wildly from the bed. Desperation blinded her to all consequences. Nothing was present to her mind but her intense misery and the desire to exchange it, even for the unknown horrors of death.

"God forgive a poor, wronged, and miserable girl! Father! mother! forgive your unhappy daughter!"

And so saying, the distracted girl placed the poison she had purchased the night before to her lips and drained it to the last drop. Then she threw herself back upon the bed. A few minutes later, when the doctor returned, Minnie Marston lay writhing in agony, apparently fast approaching death!

And by a strange fatality, in that same den of iniquity was Maggie Watson, Minnie's friend and shopmate. She, too, was a victim of malpractice. At Manchester, N. H., Maggie had met a stylish,

dashing woman, — a procuress. She was decked in silks and jewels, the spoils from her slain victims. Maggie was enchanted with her pictures of city life. She was crazy to go to Boston. Alas! She knew not that her new friend was the vilest of her sex, whose business it was to lure young girls to ruin. At first Maggie sought and obtained honorable employment, but at last she fell. When she heard that Minnie Marston had poisoned herself in that same house, the news distracted her. She flew to Minnie's room; saw her struggling in agony, and without a word turned and fled from the house.

All that night she wandered through the streets. Not a friend, not a cent of money, had she. Homeless, friendless, penniless, hopeless, she was driven to desperation. Her fate will be revealed hereafter.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE STREETS AT NIGHT. — A FATHER'S SEARCH FOR HIS LOST LAMB.

It was a chill, damp night in October. The streets were a mass of mud and drizzling ooze; but the rain had ceased falling, and a faint and fitful moonlight was struggling through the skurrying clouds. The street lamps shot out a pale uncertain gleam through the mist that sought to shroud them.

People were hurrying along the moist sidewalks, elbowing each other without ceremony or apology in their anxious haste, perhaps to reach comfortable homes, warm firesides, and the cheerful evening meal that awaited them in the bosom of their families.

For most of that moving throng the day's work was over. Rest or recreation had been earned. But there was one, at least, among them, whose wearied frame could know no rest; whose tireless labor, beginning with the rising sun, ended not with its setting. He was an old man, whose whitened hair and bowed figure had become familiar to the habitual passers on the leading thoroughfares. His dress and manner bespoke his respectability, and the mute, anxious expression of countenance with which he met the looks attracted toward him, involuntarily awoke the interest and sympathy of the most careless and indifferent.

There was something intensely appealing in the yearning, wistful look which his face habitually wore. It spoke with an eloquence more potential than the most persuasive speech. It made him a marked man in the midst of a multitude. Perfect strangers moved by an irresistible compassion had stopped him in the street and forced their sympathy upon him even before his touching story was confided to their ears.

Policemen on their several beats knew that story by heart. Every day some one of them, now in one part of the city, and now in another, was greeted by the old man with the same plaintive inquiry, — always the same; never varying, neither in words nor tones! The same anxious, wistful, half-hopeful question — “Oh! sir! Have you heard anything of my child to-day?”

A father searching for his daughter in the wilderness of a great city! His only child, his one ewe lamb, the hope and prop of his age! A beautiful girl, respected, honored, admired, winning troops of friends, whose virtue, truth, filial love and duty were the theme of all who knew her, disappearing from all human knowledge as suddenly and mysteriously as if the earth had opened and engulfed her! Such was John Marston's sad story.

For three weeks he had been seeking his daughter in Boston. Not the faintest clew had yet rewarded his search. Oh! sirs, Minnie was such a good girl! Can you help me to find her?” was his constant cry.

Friends were not wanting to aid him; and to them he told his pitiful story. “Oh! I could not rest until I got tidings of my darling child. I sent letter after letter. No one could tell me where she was. Then I said, ‘I will go to Boston myself. I will hunt Boston from palace to hovel. A father's tireless love will give me strength. God will raise up friends. I will never give up seeking for my poor girl. No, not if I drop down dead in the street.’”

He first visited Minnie's late employers; they knew nothing of her whereabouts, but proffered pecuniary aid. He thanked them and said, “My money is almost gone. I parted with my little stock in New Hampshire, sold my poor old horse, chief dependence for my farm work. Then I sold my cow. Poor Dolly! she had been Minnie's pet and playmate. It grieved me to the heart to part with her. Her soft eyes seemed to look reproachfully at me, and she moaned as I left her with her new owner. My eyes filled with tears. But I had parted with her for Minnie's dear sake, and for her sake I would part with everything!”

Minnie's boarding mistress could give no tidings of her fate. Maggie Watson, Minnie's friend and confidante, had also disappeared, — whither, no one could tell. Every avenue of hope seemed to be shut against him. Day after day the stricken father presented himself at the Central Police Office, until his story became old and his cry unheeded; even there he could gain no intelligence. One day he passed a house on Portland Street. Beneath was a liquor shop; above he saw several girls at a window. At sight of him one of them drew back as if ashamed, and hid her face.

"My God! My God! It is — But no! It cannot be my daughter. No, no. She would not hide her face from me, — me, her poor, old, distracted father." And the big tears started, his breast heaved with sobs, his gray locks shook in the wind.

Passing on, he witnessed a funeral in Crescent Place. Entering the house, he saw the mourners passing round the coffin of a fair young girl. She had fallen by malpractice; fallen in one short hour. Her cheek still bloomed as the rose. A quack had certified to another disease; thus the murderer escaped, and the victim was allowed a burial. Frail creatures with painted faces gathered round and filled the air with hysteric sobs and groans. But short-lived were their tears and their sighs.

Ah! What a sad scene for John Marston! John Marston, the country preacher and anxious father! As he peered into the coffin he cried, "Is it Minnie? Oh! Oh! Is it Minnie? Thank God! Thank God! It is not my daughter! No! No! Minnie will never, never be found in such a house as this!" And he reeled from the steps, exclaiming, "No! no! Thank God! It is not my Minnie!"

Next his weary footsteps led him to the City Hospital. Here he saw girls of all ages. Some in the last extreme of mortal agony, dying of dreadful hurts and malignant diseases. But Minnie was not there. One of these was a fair young woman of twenty, his daughter's age. She had been rescued that day from drowning; taken out of the water underneath Broadway Bridge. How had she come there? What dire extremity had caused her to take the fatal plunge? Was it necessity? Was it hunger? Was it guilt? Was it the dread of coming shame? Had she no home? No fond father or mother, brother or sister, to weep and mourn for her loss? Alas! Alas! Perhaps it was the old, old story of woman's love and man's infidelity! Another instance of

"One more unfortunate, weary of breath,
Rashly importunate, gone to her death!"

The old man turned shudderingly away. The sight of this poor girl, so like his daughter, brought to his heart with redoubled force the dread and uncertainty which shrouded Minnie's fate.

"My child! My child!" he cried, in his agony, "where, oh! where art thou, my darling child!"

Day by day John Marston treads the busy streets, from early dawn till late into the night. Slumber is almost a stranger to his eyelids. Noon and night, sunshine and storm, are to him as one. Shrinkingly he enters the dens of pleasure and vice. To find his daughter he would have invaded the very citadel of darkness.

At the North End he comes to a saloon where a crowd of young men are drinking and carousing to the sounds of laughter and profanity.

"Gentlemen," he says, humbly saluting the party, "Oh, can you help me find my daughter, my Minnie, my darling Minnie?"

"Hullo!" cries a flashily-dressed youngster, turning on the old man. "Hi! I say, old cove, where did *you* come from?"

"Oh, my Minnie! my Minnie! Help me find her!" implores the old man.

"I say, Beeswax, you're jolly green," says another of the party, surveying John Marston curiously. "What do *we* know about yer daughter?"

"By jingo, Fred," exclaims a third, laughing and bringing his hand down heavily on the shoulder of the first speaker. "I say, Fred, that gal I saw ye with last night, eh? Here's the old man right arter ye. Own up now."

"Ha, ha!" roars Fred. "I guess this old coon ain't *her* father; not by a jugful."

"Come, come, boys, let us not make fun of the old man," says the kindlier of the group. And he offers John Marston some money, but the old man shakes his head sadly and declines it as he moves away.

Still intent on his tireless search, the old man applies at a West-End haunt of vice, secretly convinced that Minnie would never voluntarily seek refuge in such a resort, yet resolving to leave no stone unturned that might aid him in his quest.

"Come in," yells a shrill female voice.

And the old man steps into the lower parlor of the house. Here are assembled some half a dozen frail young women, laughing and chatting with a couple of fast men.

"Step in, boss; step right in," says a stout, red-haired girl, as

John Marston stands in the door-way embarrassed. And running up to him, she draws him into the room.

"Glad to see ye," cries she. "Say, what'll ye take, whiskey or gin?"

"Is — is there a girl here named Minnie?" asks the old man, — in a low voice.

"Of course there is," says one of the girls; and the father's heart leaps with hope and fear. "Here, Jane," calling a servant to the door. "Here, tell Minnie to come down. Tell her her fellow's waiting for her." The rest of the company laugh boisterously at this flippant remark.

"It cannot — it cannot be *my* Minnie," says John Marston to himself, as he gazed around on the coarse features and shameless conduct of the inmates. "Oh! my God! She — she cannot have fallen so low as this."

"Hullo!" cries a young woman, bursting into the room. "Who wants to see me?"

"This old gentleman," is the answer.

"Wal, old horse, what d' you want?" asks the girl.

"Oh, I — I was looking for my daughter," says John Marston.

"Wal, ye don't think I'm your daughter, do ye?"

"No," says John Marston. "Thank God, you are not!"

"What do you mean by that?" cries the girl, starting angrily toward him.

But the old man looks at her reproachfully, sorrowfully shakes his head, and turns away murmuring, as he gains the street, —

"Oh! Minnie! My poor, poor Minnie! Better that you were in your grave, than to find you herding with such as these!"

Next he entered the police court. Looking anxiously down into the dock, he saw a score of women, mostly young, some fair, and all bearing the haggard marks of intemperance and sin.

"Oh! Can my child be here?" said the old man, plaintively, his eyes wandering from one to another. He heard an officer say that two of the girls were from New Hampshire, and his heart sank within him. He clutched the railing and gasped, —

"Point them out to me! Oh! If either should be my lost child!"

The officer indicated the girls mentioned, and called them by name. The old man clasped his trembling hands and raised them to heaven, as he fervently exclaimed, —

"Thank the Lord! Thank the Lord! My child is not here!"

Oh! Minnie! Minnie! I wrong you, my dear one! My Minnie will never be found among such shameless outcasts! God in his mercy will protect her from such a fate!"

Again the old man went on his weary way, searching for his only child.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FRANK'S APPEAL TO HIS MOTHER.—SENT TO THE ASYLUM.

When Frank Gildersleeve left Minnie that night, he had fully intended to return. His purpose perhaps was to abandon her eventually, but not at that time.

Forcep's plans were not yet ripe. At the proper time he would counsel Frank how to act. The young man was a passive tool in the dentist's hands. Frank was weak and vacillating by nature, the creature and slave of his passions. And now what little will he possessed was weakened by indulgence in strong drink. Every faculty, as well as his bodily powers, was poisoned by his rapid course of dissipation.

Therefore, when he left Madame Chastini's house, he had gone to a fashionable saloon to obtain drink. He left the place intoxicated, and wandered aimlessly around the town until a policeman accosted him.

"Who are you, my buck?" said the officer, seeing by his dress that Frank belonged to respectable society. "Come, give us your name, and where you live, or else I shall have to take you to the station house." This somewhat sobered the young man. He whispered the number of his mother's house, forgetting all about Minnie.

"Take me home (hic), Mr. Policeman," he stuttered, "and here's a *five* (hic) for you."

The officer, nothing loath, accepted the bribe, and assisted the young man to his residence on Beacon Hill.

That evening, as we have seen, Mrs. Gildersleeve was entertaining a select party of friends at dinner. Her mortification cannot be described as her son staggered into the room and muttered over some maudlin nonsense, to the dismay of the guests.

Sambo, however, was luckily at hand, and at a glance from his mistress, led the inebriate to his chamber.

It was the next day that Minnie Marston, escaping from the abortionist's house, found her way, as already related, to the residence of the Gildersleeves.

Whatever lurking doubts Mrs. Gildersleeve may have had as to Frank's denial of Minnie's story, the proud woman of the world determined never to let them be uttered by her lips. She seemed to be standing on the crumbling verge of an abyss. Her pride of wealth and name and station all took the alarm. Frank Gildersleeve, her only son though he was, had disgraced her too deeply already for forgiveness, and if this last scandal should come out, she could no longer hold her head up as the queen and leader of fashion. Something must be done, and at once.

For this unnatural mother to resolve was to act. Two physicians were summoned to the Beacon Hill mansion. Dr. Lancet adjusted his gold eye-glasses and gazed upon Frank with an air of meek benevolence.

Dr. Scalpel told him to put out his tongue.

"I'll see you hanged first!" roared Frank, irritated at the searching scrutiny of the physicians.

Dr. Scalpel took a pinch of snuff from a jewelled snuff-box, and with a meaning glance at his colleague, said, —

"Poor young man! Inclined to be violent, I see!"

Dr. Lancet nodded assentingly.

"Violent!" exclaimed Frank, looking suspiciously at the two doctors. "What do you mean? What are you here for? I am not sick enough to require the attendance of *two* physicians, am I?" And the bewildered youth raised himself up in his couch, but sank back from weakness.

"There, there! Do not distress yourself, my dear young friend," said Scalpel, soothingly. "You are only weak and debilitated, that is all."

"I know what ails me as well as you do," answered Frank, peevishly. "I'm burning up with fever — scorching inwardly. Brandy has done it. I drank to cool one fire — the fire of remorse and shame — and only kindled another, *delirium tremens*. Now, if you can cure that, why don't you go ahead, instead of standing there like a pair of grinning effigies?"

Scalpel and Lancet exchanged commiserating glances. This served but to increase the young man's irritation. Excitement and rage lent him a fictitious strength. He sprang up, his eyes glaring, his pale cheek growing hot and red, his fist doubled and arm extended at the disciples of Galen.

"Very bad — very bad!" said Scalpel, audibly, and shaking his head.

"Bad!" yelled Frank, his eyes almost starting from their sockets with rage, while he shudderingly felt the insidious warnings creeping through his frame of that fell disease which his headlong indulgence in strong drink had engendered. "Very bad, you say? Ha! Ha! What do you mean by that? Speak? Why do you nod and wink so mysteriously at each other? Why do you look at me in that cool, calculating way, as though you had me mentally under the dissecting knife! Away! Away! Leave me, I tell you! Your very looks stir up all the bad blood in me! Leave me, or by Heaven I shall do you mischief!"

And the excited and no longer responsible young man suddenly clutched a pitcher from the table at the head of the bed and made as if to hurl it at them.

The two doctors fled precipitately to the door; then as Frank, exhausted by his passion, sank back once more, Scalpel said, —

"What a pity! What a pity! I fear we can do nothing for him, Brother Lancet."

"Nothing, but to recommend a straitwaistcoat," said Lancet, gruffly; and the two worthies departed to seek Mrs. Gildersleeve, who was awaiting the result of their examination in an adjoining room.

"Well, gentlemen, what is your verdict?" Mrs. Gildersleeve inquired, in a cold, unmoved tone, as they entered.

"I regret to say, madam," said Scalpel, with an appropriate sigh, "that we can offer you no hope. Your son is no longer a responsible being. There is but one course, I fear, to be taken with him. The interests of society in general, and of your family in particular, as well as regard for the poor young gentleman himself, require that he be placed under some proper and suitable restraint."

"Very well, gentlemen," said the inflexible woman, "I leave the matter entirely in your hands. You will please make out the necessary papers that you spoke about, while I go and see my son. There are pens and paper at your service."

"Ahem? my dear madam," said Scalpel, detaining her, "I would recommend you to be careful; the young gentleman is in an extremely violent state, I am pained to say."

Mrs. Gildersleeve's lip curled scornfully.

"I think he will show no violence toward *me*," she said, haughtily. "Remember, gentlemen, I am his mother!"

And so saying she swept out of his room.

A favorite domestic, who had been in the family for years, had been assigned to act as Frank's nurse from the commencement of his recent illness. She was a good-hearted, matronly woman. Frank had always been attached to her, and with good reason. Mrs. Dawkins for years had filled the place of a mother to him. She had nursed him, had shared his childish joys and soothed his boyish troubles. Mrs. Gildersleeve, devoted to society and the demands which fashionable life constantly made upon her time, was content to leave her children to the care of this trusty servant. Thus in course of time there grew between Mrs. Dawkins and the neglected boy a strong bond of love and sympathy.

Mrs. Gildersleeve, on entering her son's chamber, found that Mrs. Dawkins had resumed her place at Frank's bedside. The nurse was speaking some soothing words in an undertone, while the young man lay back upon his couch, his hands clasped over his eyes, which were bedewed with tears. His frame was likewise agitated by convulsive sobs.

But these manifestations seemed entirely lost on the cold, worldly woman who now approached the bedside of her suffering son. No Roman mother could have displayed less emotion when sending her only child to battle, than did this American mother at sight of her boy's anguish. Was it indifference, or was it the result of that worldly, heartless training which teaches the suppression of all natural feeling and emotion, which stigmatizes as low and vulgar the indulgence of the purest and holiest and tenderest impulses of the human heart?

"You may retire until I call you, Mrs. Dawkins," said the lady to the nurse. "I wish to have some conversation with my son."

The nurse rose to obey, but Frank with sudden energy caught her by the arm, while he cried imploringly, —

"Do not leave me, nurse. I am not fit to pass through another such scene as I have just undergone. Pray stay with me, for I know I shall become agitated, and perhaps say harsh and bitter things, if left alone with my mother."

But Mrs. Gildersleeve gave the nurse a look which the latter dared not disobey, and in spite of Frank's protestations, she left mother and son alone together.

"I have but few words to say, Frank," began Mrs. Gildersleeve. "You probably already surmise their import."

"You mean, I suppose, that you want to go over the old ground again; to tell me that I am a disgrace and burden to you; reproach

"me for my lack of pride and my contumacy generally," said the young man acrimoniously.

"If I thought any such reproaches, or any appeal that a mother could make to a son, would be of the least avail, Frank Gildersleeve, I would gladly make them. But it has got beyond that. I have come to tell you of my determination, not to reason with you, or to beseech you to change your habits of life. It is too late for that."

"Too, late indeed!" cried the young man, starting up to a sitting posture. "And whose fault is it that it is too late? Not mine alone. I know that I have been wild. I know that I have not been a good son; that I have scarcely ever performed a worthy deed. I feel that my life has been a sad mistake; that I have crowded into my brief span of years a mass of sin and shame and wickedness that should long since have consigned me to a felon's cell or to an untimely grave. But when I see you turn against me! You, my own, yet unnatural mother! Then! ah! ah! nothing but the awe I have for a parent, and my reverence for God, could stay my vengeful hand."

Then with clinched hands and rolling eyes he sank back exhausted and fell asleep, Mrs. Gildersleeve watching the meanwhile. When he awoke he said,—

"Why are these doctors again here, and feeling my pulse? I am not sick. I am neither sick nor am I insane. Why call them here?"

"You cannot govern your appetite," said the mother. "I am going to send you to the asylum."

"What! You! You, my mother! You who still give liquor to your guests, and sneer at teetotalism! Can you, mother, incarcerate your only son for habits you have taught him?"

"The mansion must be closed. We cannot leave you at liberty. You have disgraced the family long enough. Society demands your restraint."

"Society? Society! What has Society done for me! What do I owe to Society? It taught me to drink, to swear, to gamble. It is heartless. Its chief religion is selfish greed. Even ministers of your own creed are members of the drinking club. Society! Society! Did you say? Ah! I hate it! I hate its very name. My blood curdles at the thought. Society once petted me and flattered me. I was its idol. But now it casts me off. I am no longer its ornament, but its victim. Victim of pampered wealth and luxury." He continued:—

"Oh! that I had been the son of a hodman, a ploughman, a tradesman, a mechanic,—anything but the son of a rich man. Then I should have been taught a trade, had developed physical health and happiness, and not have been too proud to stoop, and too indolent to work."

"But you have wrought your own destruction, and must suffer the penalty."

"Yes, my mother, in part I have. But have I not suffered enough? Do not crowd me. Do not persecute me! Do not, as a mother, treat me worse than a felon! The worst criminal is allowed trial by judge and jury. If guilty, his incarceration is limited,—limited to a few months or years, at most. If innocent, he is set free,—free as the air he breathes. Now this appetite you implanted in me, it will last forever. Then am I to be forever held in durance for your sin? Who is to set me free? Who, when you are away to Europe?"

"You say I cannot be trusted. Admit it. I am but a worm, or I should not submit to this. But whom have I injured by my conduct? Who is hurt by my fall? What bills are not paid? What hackman not rewarded? What policeman not feed? What person ever assaulted? Nothing ever suffers but Society. Ah, yes! That very Society which has made me what I am,—the sot you see! Oh! mother, listen! Listen to my word. Before you touch another glass, before you again put the bottle to your own lips, or your neighbors' lips, before you forget the besotted death of my elder brother, and the sudden demise of my father, oh! stop and think. Stop! stop! before you say the only son of Augustus Gildersleeve shall die in an insane asylum!"

"But you may not die! You may recover."

"Recover! No! Never! The blow is struck. This last, this heaviest stroke has already broken my heart. As sure as you go abroad and leave your son in a prison cell, you will never again see him alive. I never asked for an existence. I shall not retain it long. The mother that gave me life,—she can have it back. Hear it, mother! Hear me! Ere your foot touches this threshold again, Frank Gildersleeve is in his grave."

"It is useless for you to go on in this strain," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, coldly, as he paused. My time is too brief now to listen to the wanderings of a distempered imagination."

"But you *shall* hear me!" cried the unhappy youth, roused to a pitch of wild excitement by his mother's bearing. "I have stood

in awe of you since my earliest childhood. You have chilled and repressed every source of pure and natural feeling in my breast. I can remember how you repulsed my childish proffers of affection; how you turned a cold ear to my lisping words of love, and ordered me into the nursery, and to the care of hirelings, lest I should decompose your fashionable attire, or my touch should desecrate or soil your ribbons or laces. Such was the subjection you kept me in that it is not to be wondered at that I have never had a will of my own. You and your example first led me to court the fascinations of the wine-cup. At the family meal I first tasted strong drink, for wine in this house has always been as free and plenty as water; and that taste has grown to a desire, and that desire to an appetite, and that appetite to a frenzy, until it has left me the weak and debased creature you see before you, — without a joy, without a care, ay, and without a hope to cheer me! Oh! mother! mother! Can you stand there, as unmoved, as icily cold as a marble statue; can you look down upon the utter and wretched ruin of your only son, without one sign of pity and love, — without a sigh, without a single tear?"

He paused as if he had hoped by this passionate appeal to rouse some dormant spark of maternal feeling in that proud bosom; but he might as well have uttered those heart-rending words to the inanimate marble itself as to that frozen, immovable semblance of a woman.

"When you have finished these wild ravings, Frank Gildersleeve," she said, still coldly, as he paused, "which I regard as the evidence of a disordered mind merely, I will inform you of the matters which induced me to come here."

"Ravings, you call them!" exclaimed the young man, driven almost to the verge of madness. "Oh! cruel, iron-hearted mother! Can such an anomaly in nature exist? Can a mother shut out every spark of sympathy for her only son? Can she see him lying before her eyes, sick unto death, crushed in spirit and hope, yearning for one loving word, one pitying glance, one tender caress, and not feel the tie of nature; experience no quickening throb, no human sympathetic emotion? Such cold, such cruel heartlessness would shame a heathen parent! Oh!" he cried, clasping his trembling hands in a gesture of the most piteous supplication, "Oh! mother! for the love of heaven, for humanity's sake, in the sacred name of God, show me by a word, a look, a sigh even, that you are not all marble, that I am not the offspring of a callous, heartless, soulless monster!"

The energy which had sustained the young man in this burning appeal, which seemed to be wrung from his very soul, left him with the last words, and he burst into a passion of tears as he again fell back.

Not even this sufficed to move the implacable woman. Not a nerve trembled, not an eyelid quivered. Whether that terrible appeal, which was also an awful accusation, pierced the armor which she had accustomed herself to wear over every feeling, was known to herself alone. Perhaps in after years that scene may rise up and confront her, bringing with it an agony of remorse and unavailing regret!

But now, she only waves her hand impatiently, as she says in measured tones, —

"Now that you have apparently exhausted this tragic strain, Frank Gildersleeve, please listen to me. You know that I have long planned to take your sister with me to Europe this season. Gertrude's health absolutely requires the change. All our arrangements were perfected, and we were to have started this week. Your folly, which has resulted in your present illness, has to some extent disarranged our plans. But I do not feel called upon to give them up entirely, and have merely postponed our departure for a day or two. While we are gone this house will be shut up, consequently it will be necessary that you should be removed to some other place, where you can have proper care and medical attendance. Do you follow me so far?"

"Yes," said Frank, bitterly. "You mean that you are going to leave me to the care of strangers and mercenaries."

"I repeat, that you will have the best of care and attention, and when we return I hope to find you a changed and a better man."

"Where am I to be taken, mother?"

"Not a great ways from here," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, evasively. "It is enough for you to know at present that you will be left in good hands."

"Oh let me remain here! Let me die in my own home!" moaned the youth. "Mother, I do not think I am long for this world. Do not go away! Do not leave me to die alone!"

"There's no danger of your dying, Frank. Your physicians assure me that you will speedily recover your bodily health."

"When, then, do you intend to make this change? When are you going to Europe?"

"Day after to-morrow the steamer in which we have taken state-rooms will sail."

"Oh! my God!" moaned Frank. "So soon! When am I to be removed?"

"To-morrow morning. Now, as you will probably desire to see Gertrude, and as there will be no opportunity to-morrow, I will send her to you. I am glad to find that on the whole you take this so calmly."

And so saying, Mrs. Gildersleeve passed out of the room. She little knew what was passing in her son's mind. She had been unable to deceive him altogether about the destination to which she had resolved to send him. He felt that she had in view some project that menaced him with the loss of his liberty. What that project was, he hardly dared imagine. But he knew that he was in too helpless a state to oppose her will. A few moments later Gertrude entered the apartment.

"I am so sorry, dear Frank," she said, "that you are so sick. Mamma has told you that we are going day after to-morrow, and I have come to say good-by."

Frank was on the point of asking her aid to thwart the purposes of his mother, but on second consideration he decided otherwise. Owing to her innocence and inexperience, Gertrude could not render him any assistance. He knew that his sister loved her mother devotedly, and he loved the innocent girl too much to inflict a pang upon her by discovering to her his mother's heartlessness.

"Gerty — sister," he said, struggling for composure, "I have not been much of a brother to you, but we have never quarrelled that I can remember. You will think kindly of me when — when you are away."

"Of course I will, Frank dear. I shall never cease to think of you and to pray for you. I wish you were going with us, but mamma says it is impossible. Try and get well, dear brother, by the time we come home."

"I shall try, certainly, dear. And now before you say good by, I want you to promise to do me a little favor. I have written a hasty word to some one that you do not know, and I want it to be posted to-morrow without fail. Will you mail it for me, sister?"

"I will, my dear brother; that's a very small favor, I am sure. Is there nothing else I can do to serve you?"

"Nothing, Gerty; nothing little sister. Oh! Minnie, Minnie," he exclaimed, "what have I done?" Then turning to Gertrude. "Think kindly of me, and now kiss me once more. Good-by! good-by!"

"There, there! Oh! how hot your poor head is. Let me put my hand upon it. How your temples are throbbing; let me sit beside you and keep my hand upon your head until you fall asleep. There, now, doesn't that feel better?"

"It does; it does, a great deal better, Gerty," And Frank fell into a doze, murmuring, "God bless you little sister! God bless you!"

Gertrude sat by his bedside with her hand upon his head, until his regular breathing told her he was asleep. Then she left the apartment on tiptoe.

She found her mother waiting outside of the door. What letter is that you have in your hand, Gertrude?" queried Mrs. Gildersleeve.

Gertrude informed her. "Very well; give it to me, and I will see that it is sent."

Without a moment's suspicion, Gertrude obeyed. Mrs. Gildersleeve went directly to her chamber. Intuitively she guessed the purport of this letter. She sat down, and looked long and earnestly at the address on the missive. A terrible conflict was going on in that mother's breast.

Suddenly she tore open the letter, and eagerly devoured its contents.

"Send this letter to *her* who has sought to disgrace our name! Never!"

"I will see her once more! Yes, I will again confront this artful woman. What a fortunate chance that this letter should have fallen into my hands. The address informs me where to seek her. But ah! The house may not be a respectable one. No matter! I can disguise myself. It is a dark night! But how to get into the house? How to see the girl? If my wit cannot supply the means, money at least will!"

And so saying, Mrs. Gildersleeve hastily proceeded to change her elegant dress for a plain dark one, removed the jewels from her ears and fingers, enveloped herself in a waterproof cloak which completely concealed her patrician form, and with a thick veil shrouding her features, stood for one moment before her dressing-glass. In the hall she ran upon her maid.

"It is only me, Victorine," she said, with a signal of caution, "I am going out."

The discreet maid nodded, and opened the door to allow her mistress to pass out. The night was indeed as dark as Erebus.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MRS. GILDERSLEEVE VISITS MINNIE.—“NO HOPE BUT IN HEAVEN!”

Minnie Marston lies weeping and moaning on her sick-couch at Chastini's house. Restoratives had ejected the poison, but a deeper ailment tortured her soul. She felt lost! lost! Oh, for a friend, a Christian friend, to speak one word of comfort, or utter a single prayer!

Suddenly appeared, bending over her, the face of a female. Softly she had entered the room, and stealthily approached the bedside. To Minnie the advent of this stranger seemed like the dawn of a new hope springing up in her desolate heart.

“Ah! who are you?” she murmured, eagerly scanning the shrouded figure. “Has heaven at last sent me a friend?”

“Are you indeed so destitute of friends?” asked the visitor, in a voice whose carefully-modulated tones struck on Minnie's ear like a voice from the spirit world.

“Destitute! Oh, madam, there is not one in this wide world so destitute, so forsaken, so in need of a friend!”

Was this art or was it sincerity? thought the intruder.

“You are then a stranger in Boston?” she asked.

“Yes, madam, a lone stranger without a friend, and dying without a hope.”

“But you have friends elsewhere? Parents, perhaps, and relatives, of course.”

“I once *had* friends, but they would look coldly on me now,” said Minnie, with a burst of tears. “I *had* parents,—dear, loved parents; but, alas! I fear they would never acknowledge *me* now to be their daughter.”

“Ah! You have sinned too deeply for forgiveness, you think?”

“Sinned! Oh, yes; the world would call my misfortunes the consequences of sin,” said Minnie, bitterly. “Oh, perhaps if you could hear the story of my life, you would say that if I have sinned, it was through ignorance and credulity, but not through wickedness.”

“It is to hear your story that I have come,” answered the other.

“Ah! Perhaps you are one of those kind and charitable missionaries of whom I have heard? Then indeed I may regard you as a friend, and unbosom myself to you without a fear.”

The visitor did not answer ; and Minnie, in her eager hope, taking her silence for assent, briefly recounted the history of her trials and misfortunes. She was spiritually famishing for want of a Christian friend and Christian consolation. She never for a moment doubted that her jailers, believing she was dying, had relented and sent this woman missionary to comfort and console her last hours.

"And you have never attended church since you arrived in Boston ?" asked the visitor, as Minnie concluded.

"No, madam. Oh ! it was wrong, very wrong, I know. Doubtless wrong in me, for I am a clergyman's daughter."

"A clergyman's daughter ? You forgot so soon, then, the precepts and influences of your parents ?"

"Alas ! alas ! It is quite true, I fear, madam." And Minnie's tears flowed afresh.

"You not only forsook those kind parents, but kept them in torture and suspense ? You went off with your lover and sent no word to comfort and allay their fears ?"

"Oh ! oh ! spare me ! Don't accuse me of my wickedness, dear lady ! The thoughts of my deserting them will break my heart !"

"But why did you not write home, and tell your sorrows ?"

"I could not ! I dared not ! Oh ! how could I have told my parents ? I feared they would never believe what I have suffered I was distracted, — knew not what to do."

"This is very strange. I cannot understand it. A girl, innocent and pure, though she *had* fallen into a villain's snare, would be strong in her innocence, strong to defend her good name ; would never shield her destroyer at the expense of everything that she held sacred."

"Oh ! have mercy on a poor, misguided girl, madam !" cried Minnie, clasping her hands entreatingly, while torrents of tears fell upon her wasted but still lovely face.

"Mercy ! Mercy is for those who repent. For those who atone for the wrong they have done, the evil they have wrought !" said the stranger, in severe tones. To Minnie's ears those words seemed like the voice of an accusing conscience ; those ringing tones sounded like the trump of judgment, from which there was no appeal. She shuddered, and clasped her trembling hands before her face.

"Oh, I thought you had come to comfort, not upbraid me !" she sobbed. "Oh, madam, perhaps *you* may have a daughter whom

you fondly love! Think of her in my situation! Think of this dear daughter, innocent and good, who has been guarded from every taint of vice and impurity by a mother's loving care. Think of her desolate, friendless, an unwilling victim of man's brutal brutality —"

"Stop!" cried the stranger, in electrical tones. Dare not mention *my* daughter in the same breath with yourself! *You*, an outcast, a false, designing woman, trading on the weaknesses of men; false even to the last! seeking to awake commiseration by practising the most shameless duplicity. I came, hoping against hope, indeed, to find you repentant, willing to acknowledge your wickedness. But I find you hardened in your youthful depravity; resolute in your unblushing shame!"

Minnie had listened to this like one suffering from a frightful dream. She had started up in bed, her hands thrown out in wildest appeal. Who was this woman who made such terrible accusations against her? Were missionaries like this? At last she cried, —

"Oh, madam! You wrong me! I am not the vile creature you think me. Wicked enough I have been. Wicked in forsaking my dear parents. Wicked in yielding to Frank Gildersleeve's promises. Wicked in keeping his crime secret. Wicked in abandoning my religious duties. But I am not false, not designing, and God, my Heavenly Father, knows how truly repentant I am."

"Cease this impious talk!" cried the other, sternly. "You cannot dupe me!"

"Oh! What *shall* I say? What *shall* I do, to convince you how you wrong me?" cried the poor girl, in an agony of despair.

"Nothing you can say or do will convince me of it! You but waste your breath."

"Oh, madam, madam, do not thus torture my breaking heart. Ah! But you cannot be a good woman. You cannot be a missionary, for they are kind and charitable. Who, who, then, are you?"

The stranger stepped back a pace, and flung off her veil. Minnie gazed at her in speechless bewilderment for an instant; then she cried, —

"Ah! I know you now! Good heavens! Can it be you, — you, Mrs. Gildersleeve?"

"Yes, wretched girl; it is the mother of your victim."

"My victim?" Minnie repeated, wondering.

"Your victim! Do you know your artifices have estranged my son from his home and kindred? Never till he saw you, never till your unholy arts had lured him away, did he ever stoop to a wicked or disreputable act."

"Oh, my God! Can I have done this?"

"Yes, you! Do you dare deny it?"

"Oh, what shall I say? How can I make this proud woman believe me? Heaven help me, madam, I never tried to win your son from you. I loved him,—dearly loved him. I did not seek him. Indeed I did not. He—he saw me in an ill-fated hour for us both. Oh, pray, madam, pity and believe me. Indeed you wrong me. Not intentionally, I know. You have taken a prejudice against me. Your son saw me at a dentist's office. He—he told me that he loved me. How could I help but believe him?"

"You bewitched him, girl; you set your trap skilfully. He was young, inexperienced, had no knowledge of woman's wiles."

"Oh! no! no! Madam, you are deceived!" cried Minnie, nearly beside herself.

"No, girl! I neither deceive myself, nor will I allow you to deceive me. You are one of a numerous class who prey on rich young men; lead them down to ruin and death."

"Oh, horror! madam, do not for mercy's sake, say that! Tell me that you are merely trying me. You wish to see how strong is my love, how true my woman's nature. Oh, yes, dear, dear lady," she cried piteously, catching Mrs. Gildersleeve's hand in her feeble grasp, and trying to fondle it; but the other quickly drew it away, as if fearing deadly contagion from the touch; "oh, lady, I see now the object of your seeming cruelty. You could not be so unkind to a dog. Your heart is soft and tender, I am sure. Tell me, oh, tell me, in the Saviour's blessed name, that you do not mean those terrible words."

"Impious wretch!" cried the other, with a strong expression of aversion and disgust. "Such blasphemy is enough to call down heaven's vengeance! But it is time to drop the mask. You see your hypocrisy is entirely lost on me. Confess, now, the lies your lips have uttered. Renounce at once and forever all claim on your son."

"Oh, you would not take from me my last, my only hope?"

"Yes, when that hope rests on a wicked falsehood. You never married Frank Gildersleeve!"

Minnie, weak and exhausted by her illness, could only murmur, —

"Heaven only knows, madam, I—I thought I was married to your son. If I have been misled, then — then —"

She could not finish the words, but buried her face in her hands, and wept convulsively

But Mrs. Gildersleeve was thoroughly possessed with the idea that poor Minnie was skilfully playing a part.

"Well, it will make no difference. You will never again see my son. The hand of God has been laid upon him. Frank Gildersleeve is incurably insane! To-morrow he will be placed in an asylum, from which only death can ever release him."

And without another word she turned and left the room.

"In an asylum!" murmured Minnie, in horror-stricken accents. "Then there is no hope for me but in heaven! Heaven redress my wrongs! Heaven shield the innocent! Heaven hear my prayer! Verily I have no hope but in heaven!" And Minnie, with an agonized groan, sank back unconscious, to be awaked, if awaked at all on earth, by a more friendly voice, a more forgiving heart, than that of Mrs. Augustus Gildersleeve!

Down stairs Mrs. Gildersleeve encountered Jane Ripley, otherwise Chastini.

"I hope madam found the young lady in a repentant frame of mind?" said the woman, obsequiously.

"My efforts were unavailing," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, coldly. "The girl is obdurate. I wash my hands of her, and leave her to her fate."

Mother Ripley's countenance fell. She had somehow fancied that the stranger was some relative of Minnie's, and golden visions of payment for past trouble and future possibilities began to dance before her eyes. The strange lady's tone dispelled at once and forever these pleasant anticipations, and it was with words that sounded more like a curse than a blessing that she ushered Mrs. Gildersleeve out of the door.

Twenty-four hours later and Mrs. Gildersleeve and Gertrude were on their way to Europe, Frank Gildersleeve was an inmate of an insane asylum, and Minnie Marston still lay hovering between life and death.

On this same night a strange scene was taking place at the city morgue. Maggie Watson, Minnie's companion and shopmate, betrayed and abandoned, had drowned herself in Charles River. Jerks and Sambo had seen her body at the morgue, and had informed Rev. John Marston. He arrived, much agitated, leaning on his staff, still searching for his child. "Oh," he said, "kind sirs, cannot you help me to find my daughter? Oh! Minnie was such a good girl! She would never forsake her parents. Some vile hand has entrapped my child. Oh! Minnie! Minnie! where can you be?"

An undertaker was relating his experience. When Mr. Marston heard the story of the strange burials he had witnessed, accidents, sudden deaths, of the many bodies brought to that morgue, the agony of bereaved friends, of false certificates from physicians, how to obtain them, how to dispose of bodies suspected of foul play, of unreported crimes, of suicides and murders, then he trembled anew for his daughter's fate.

At this moment the inspector uttered an exclamation. He had been examining the corpse of the drowned woman. In a pocket-book found in her dress he had discovered a note which the crazed woman had neglected to mail. This he passed to the undertaker, requesting him to read it aloud. The note ran thus:—

DEAR MOTHER: I am cruelly wronged. Before this reaches you, I shall be no more. When I saw Minnie Marston's agony after taking poison at Madame Chastini's, I resolved on an easier death. Farewell! The dark waters cover me.

MAGGIE WATSON.

"Oh, God! That is Minnie! my dear Minnie! Oh heavens! Is she poisoned? Tell me! Pray tell me where is Chastini's house?" said John Marston, his gray locks shaking in the wind, his head bowing, and his bosom heaving with convulsions. Then the crowd pressed nearer to him, and wept in sympathy with his agony.

"I will tell you!" said Jerks. "This undertaker knows the very house; I shall be there in half an hour. Sambo can stay to accompany you. Tell Mrs. Marston to hurry up, she may yet see her child alive." And the grass did not grow under Jerk's feet as he hurried away to Chastini's house.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MINNIE'S PERSECUTIONS. — JERKS BRINGS GOOD TIDINGS.

"She sha'n't stay in my house another day!" exclaimed Jane Ripley, stamping her foot and scowling vindictively at Minnie Marston.

"Yes," said Dr. Ring, "if she should die here it would cause an inquest."

"And that would ruin my business," said the woman.

"And mine, too," said Forceps. "Frank Gildersleeve has abandoned her. We can't get any more money out of him. What to do with her is the question."

"Send her to the City Hospital," said Dr. Ring.

"Then as you brought her here, Dick Forceps, it's your place to take her away."

"Oh," murmured Minnie, feebly, "don't move me from here. I pray and beseech you to let me stay where I am."

"I guess we will!" said "Mother" Ripley, with a sneer. "You'll go out of this house in just about no time. Dick, you go out and get a hack. Doctor, you make out the papers so's to get her into the hospital; and I'll get her ready to start. Come, now, you, Miss or Mrs., or whatever you are! Rouse up out of that bed this instant!"

"Oh! you will murder me!" cried Minnie, cringing away from the brutal hands that were laid upon her.

"Stop your noise. If you cry out like that again I'll smother you with this pillow!" yelled the woman.

"Oh, have mercy on a poor girl! Do not hurt me, I pray. I am too sick and weak to be moved. Oh! Let me die in peace."

"Die! You sha'n't die here, I tell you. Do you s'pose I'm going to have my place overhauled by the police?"

"Oh! oh! spare me! In pity's name, spare me!"

"Then git up out of that!"

"I cannot get up! Oh, believe me, I am very sick! Oh, how gladly would I get up and leave this awful house if I could!"

"Awful house! Don't you dare call my house bad names, if you do I'll strangle you, you hussy. Come, for the last time, will you get up and let us carry you peaceably to the hospital?"

"It would kill me to be moved," said the weeping girl. "Oh! have you no pity, no mercy!"

"The carriage is at the door," said Forceps, at that moment re-entering the room.

"Then ketch hold of her here with me. I won't stand no more foolin'. You've got to go, and you might as well make up your mind to it first as last!"

And so saying, the woman caught Minnie roughly by the shoulders. Minnie uttered a cry of pain and terror.

"Take hold of her feet, Dick," screamed the maddened Jezebel. "And you, Doctor, gag her with that handkerchief."

Forceps had started to obey; but before he could touch the frightened and almost fainting girl, the door was thrown violently open, and Jonathan Jerks dashed into the room. His hand fell heavily on the dentist's shoulder, and before that villain could utter a word, he was hurled headlong across the room.

"Touch that girl at your peril, one of you!" Jerks cried, his tall form towering like a Hercules. "And you, woman, stand back!"

"I'd like to know who you are? What right have you in my house?" said Jane Ripley; but her face was ashy pale.

"The right of every honest man to prevent a crime!" said Jonathan, sternly. He pointed to Minnie, who had risen on one arm. She was looking with speechless gratitude at her deliverer.

"How did you get into this house?" demanded Forceps, when he could recover from his astonishment.

"Why," said Jonathan, coolly, "I found the door open for somebody *to be carried out*, I suppose. It looked kinder inviting, and so I walked right in. And it strikes me I came just in time."

"Well, now supposing you walk right out again!" said Forceps, cautiously edging up toward Jerks, with his hand in his pocket, and his eye gleaming dangerously.

"Couldn't think of it," said Jonathan, with provoking sangfroid. "There! there! my poor little girl!" he added to Minnie, who was clinging in mute supplication to his arm, and quivering with fear that he would abandon her. "I ain't going to leave you. Don't you be a bit alarmed."

"You *shall* leave her!" cried Forceps, now thoroughly infuriated, and about to draw a weapon. But Jonathan's keen eye was on him, and quick as lightning he raised his huge fist and knocked him down.

"Call the police! Call the police! We shall all be murdered alive!" cried Jane Ripley, forgetting, in her terror, that the police were about the last persons she cared to see in her house.

"That's right," said Jonathan, derisively. "Call away! The police are just what we want here!" Then raising his voice, he shouted, "Walk right in, Mr. Officer! I guess it's about time for you to show yourself."

And, to the surprise and consternation of the guilty trio, a police officer, with his club drawn, sprang into the room.

"You see," said Jonathan, thoroughly enjoying the astonishment of the others, "I took the precaution to speak to this gentleman in blue coat and brass buttons before I ventured into this den of murder, this slaughter house of the innocents. I came here on purpose, do ye hear? I came to save this poor little girl, whom you were doing your best to murder, inhuman monsters that you are! And she *shall* be saved! I know the whole story of her wrongs, — wrongs that cry to heaven for redress! And they *shall* be redressed! Every one who has had a hand in this poor innocent's misfortunes shall answer for it! I know that poor child's father. I've known *her* since she was an infant. Officer, keep your eye on these people. Don't let one of 'em leave the room. I give them in charge. Look sharp, now, for I shall hold you responsible!"

"Oh! thank God you came," said Minnie, weakly, but looking up into his face with a grateful, restful glance. "I knew you at once. Oh! Jonathan! Jonathan! Have I a single friend left in the world?"

"Friend! I guess you have, Minnie. Why, all Boston would be your friends if they once heard your sad story. I'm your friend. That policeman's your friend. And you have other and dearer friends close at hand."

"What! Whom do you mean, Jonathan?" cried Minnie, in a breathless, eager whisper, raising herself upon one arm.

"Now don't excite yourself, my dear little girl. You must be calm!" said Jonathan, soothing her as he would a little child. "Who — who would you rather see now than any others in the whole world?"

Minnie's thoughts flew as if by intuition to her parents in their far-away New Hampshire home. Who else but them could Jonathan have referred to? But the next moment dispelled that sudden hope. How could her lame father, her sick and feeble mother, make such a long journey? Besides, with their humble means, how could they provide for the expense? Her wan countenance, lighted for an instant by a gleam of joy, now fell, sad and disconsolate.

"Oh, Jonathan," she said, tears of disappointment in her eyes

"I thought at first you were speaking of my dear, dear parents. Those dear parents whom I have treated so wickedly."

And then she burst into a paroxysm of sobs and tears, and wildly reviled herself, and seemed to be plunged into the deepest despair. Jonathan tried in vain to comfort her. His heart was torn with pity. Oh! where was Mr. Marston? Why did he not come? He alone could comfort his suffering daughter.

"Oh! dark, dark as the grave seems my lot, moaned Minnie. "I have brought this all on myself. I have deceived my parents. God is punishing me! Oh! to hear my dear father's voice! Oh! to listen to a prayer from his dear lips! Oh! to feel my mother's arms around me! Oh! pity! pity! Oh! Father in Heaven, have mercy upon me! Forgive me my transgressions! Comfort me with a hope!"

Her eyes seemed starting from their sockets. Her breath came and went in hurried gasps. Her tortured heart was like to burst, with its weight of woe and burden of grief.

"Hope! Hope!" she cried. "Oh!" there is no hope for me! I have sinned too grievously for forgiveness! Heaven turns a deaf ear to my prayers! God has forsaken me! Oh! I have sinned beyond all mercy! Faith no longer sustains me! Love deserts me! My parents' love! My husband's love! Oh! No father, no mother, no husband, no little babe!" And growing wilder and more incoherent, she shrieked, starting up with glazing eyes: "Ah! Where is my babe? My little child? They have torn it from me! Give it back to me! Return my baby to my famishing heart! I have been a mother, and have not seen my child! Have they smothered it? Have they murdered it in this terrible house? Oh! my little one! My innocent babe! Come back to me! come back to cheer and comfort my desolate heart! Oh! my babe is dead! God would not let it live. He punishes me through my child! I feel the penalty of disobedience! Oh! will no voice speak comfort to me? Is every heart deaf to my cries? Can earth be so pitiless? Heaven scorns my supplications! Oh! I am fainting! My strength is almost gone! I feel death's icy fingers! Save me! save me! Help! help!"

Through the house rang her wild cries! They pierced to the very souls of those who heard them. Fearful, conscience-smitten, those guilty ones stood quaking in the back part of the room. They gazed apprehensively at each other, but dared not speak. The policeman looked threateningly at them, and piteously at poor Minnie.

Jonathan wrung his hands, and tears flowed down his furrowed cheeks. Oh! Where was old John Marston? Why did he not come? *Why* did he not come?

All at once an answering cry came to their startled ears.

"My child! My child!" It mounted the stairs.

"My child! My child!" It rang through the hall.

"Minnie! Minnie! I come! I come!"

And then through the door hobbled an aged form, with streaming white hair, and heaving breast, and trembling limbs. Straight to the bed he went, regardless of all there, seeing only his daughter's form, which, just sinking back, fainting and dying, seemed to feel new life, new hope invigorate her veins, at that magic voice. She sprang up, and stretched out her arms, crying:—

"Father! Father! Have you come? Have you found me? Oh! my deliverer! Oh! my savior!"

Words failed; she could say no more. About her neck she felt her father's arms. Upon his aged breast her head was drawn, tenderly, caressingly, as when a little child. Upon her upturned brow she felt his tears fall down like a benediction from Heaven. She uttered one sigh, — a sigh of hope, and faith restored, and prayerful thanksgiving, and then her eyes closed, and earth, with all its cares, its miseries, and its griefs, seemed slipping from her grasp.

And poor John Marston, upon his knees, his form convulsed, his daughter on his heart, his faithful staff cast uselessly on the floor, raised his tearful face to Heaven in silent prayer.

Yes, Minnie was found at last!

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN A MAD-HOUSE. — FUNERAL WITHOUT A MOURNER.

The light of a wintry dawn streamed in at the grated window of a room in Dr. Mildmay's celebrated asylum for the insane. That chill morning gleam fell upon the figure of a young man, in whose emaciated and ghastly countenance it would be difficult to recognize any trace of resemblance to Frank Gildersleeve. And yet it was he.

In a weak and semi-conscious state, Frank had been conveyed to the institution. The thirst for intoxicating stimulants which was consuming him had been indulged at the last moment by advice of the physicians whom Mrs. Gildersleeve had consulted, as the surest means to produce a quiescent state. It was thus he had reached the asylum. For three days he had now been in the hands of Dr. Mildmay, and as yet had not been awakened to a realizing sense of his situation.

Was Frank Gildersleeve insane?

It would be a difficult question to decide, even with the help of a legislative investigating committee, how many people are yearly immured in such retreats, who are in the full and complete possession of their faculties. Society, in its anxious regard for its own safety, frequently encroaches on the rights and liberties of its individual members. The Golden Age of personal security has not yet arrived, but we may fervently thank heaven that our epoch exhibits a striking advancement in this respect over other periods, in the multiplied and increasing safeguards which are being thrown around individual rights.

The certificate of two physicians of high standing had pronounced Frank Gildersleeve insane. His frequent fits of violence would seem to sustain their conclusion. That he was rational on many points did not militate against the position they had taken. His excessive dissipation had undoubtedly weakened his mind, and there were indications that softening of the brain, if it had not already set in, could only be retarded by a course of treatment. There is no question but the unfortunate young man might have been safely treated in his own home. This, however, did not suit the wishes or the convenience of his proud and cold-hearted mother, and so he had been sentenced to the retreat of Dr. Mildmay. For three days Frank had remained in this apathetic state, submitting generally to all that was required of him, but at last manifesting impatience, and

on one occasion breaking out into a fit of such extreme violence that he had been placed for safety in a padded cell. It is here that we now find him.

He moves restlessly in his slumber, and every now and then mutters some incoherent words.

Suddenly he shrieks out,—

"No! No! It was not my doings! I never meant to harm you. Oh! Minnie! Minnie! Oh! my God! Why did I ever leave you, dear Minnie? Ah! Minnie would not have forsaken me in my trouble nor turned me off as my mother has."

His eyes unclose as he starts up in bed, and passes his hand slowly over his forehead.

"It was only a dream, after all," he murmurs, his gaze slowly travelling around the apartment. "Ha! Am I awake or am I still dreaming? What does this mean? Where am I? Not at home, surely! I can't remember any such room as this in the house! Where is all my handsome furniture?" he says, looking at the walls. "Where my pictures and books, and all my costly knick-knacks and trifles? Why, this place is as bare as a tomb! Not a chair, not a table! Ha! what am I lying on? A mattress laid on the floor—no bed? What does it mean?"

No glimpse of the terrible truth as yet breaks in upon his mind. He stares curiously at the walls on either hand, which are all covered with the thick pad designed to prevent the patient from beating out his brains during some paroxysm of madness. He touches it, strikes it with his clinched fist, then springs to an erect position and presses both hands to his brow in mute bewilderment.

Above his head, at the end of the room, he now perceives a grated window. To this object he feebly moves, with the same wondering and bewildered expression on his face. But the window-sill is high above his reach. Slowly he retreats backward, his eyes still fixed on the window, until he arrives at the opposite end of the room. From this angle of sight he can see something of the outside world, and seemingly hung in mid-sky, a large, bright oval object on which the rays of the dawn are playing. It is the distant dome of the State House, and its associations instantly recall his scattered recollections. Like a flash of light, memory irradiates his obscured mental vision. His last interview with his mother, the examination of the two physicians and their significant observations not then understood, and all that had occurred on that day came back to him like a swift, rushing tide.

"Heaven help me!" he cries, tearing his hair in a sudden frenzy. "I see it all now! My mother's threat has been indeed fulfilled! I could not, dared not believe she would go to that extremity. May God forgive her! She has put me in a madhouse."

He flung himself upon the floor, grovelling there in abject misery, uttering loud moans and piercing cries.

"Sambo, Sambo! will nobody come to speak to me? Locked up and alone! What can this mean? Hullo, there! Does any body hear me? My God, my head is splitting and I am afraid to be alone. Hullo! hullo! No answer! Oh for a friend — a hackman, a bar-tender, a servant, the bootblack who used to black my boots — anybody! O my God! why am I locked up in this place and left here alone? What does it mean?"

"Shut up!" said a gruff voice.

"Ah! somebody at last," exclaimed the miserable youth; "thank God for his presence, even though he prove an enemy; say, who's there?"

"You keep quiet or it will be worse for you."

"Let me out!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Where am I?"

"Sylum."

"What?"

"Sylum, of course."

"What kind of an asylum?"

"What kind? Insane 'sylum, of course."

"Insane asylum! "Oh, I'll soon get out of this! I'll write a note to Forceps at once, and he will soon get me out."

"You may write as many notes as you please," said the keeper; "they won't go out of here. You've come here for your good, and have been committed reg'lar, everything properly done, — doctors' certificates all correct. Physicians in good standing — respectable, learned — make insanity a special study. No good for you to kick. You are here, and here you must stay till your friends give the order for restoring you to liberty." So saying the keeper moved off, and Frank was again left alone.

His thoughts were bitter.

"An insane asylum," he soliloquized; "it has come to this at last. Placed here to preserve the credit of the Gildersleeve family. The keeper is right. Here I must stay until those who incarcerated me give the order for my release. If I had committed a burglary and

been sentenced to the State Prison, I would be discharged at the expiration of my sentence. If I was arrested for any crime, I would have a fair trial, and if shown to be innocent, would be discharged. If found guilty, the term of my imprisonment would be stated, and I might shorten that by good conduct. Nay, if I were even sold into slavery, or cast away on a desert island, I might hope for redemption or rescue, but there's no hope of liberation from a mad-house until it please those to relent who placed me here. I may stay here for life. The door has closed behind me. Family pride stands between me and liberty. Oh, heaven, why are such outrages permitted in a free and enlightened country? It would have taken twelve men to deprive me of liberty if I had been accused of crime. I have done nothing against the law, yet the purchased signatures of a couple of rascally physicians are enough to hold me here forever. Oh, that I hadn't drank that brandy! There's where they got their advantage. I'm doomed! Oh, for a friend—anybody that cares for Frank Gildersleeve! But nobody cares for me! I'm as friendless as the most miserable outcast. The only one that ever cared for me I cast off. Oh! Minnie! Minnie! Forgive me! God is taking vengeance on me for that wrong. They say the man who wins a woman's love and tramples upon it never prospers. The curse is falling on my head! Vengeance is on my track. How I shake! Oh! for a glass of brandy! I'll soon go mad! Oh, my God! my God! how will this end? I'm going to have *delirium tremens*, and then it's all up with Frank Gildersleeve!"

"How do you feel?"

Frank looked up and saw a face peering through the wicket of his cell door.

"Miserable!" he answered.

"You must keep calm."

"How long am I to remain here?"

"Till you are cured."

"Cured of what?"

"Ha! ha! that's good; the old story. You are sane, I suppose."

"I am just now, but I don't expect to be so long, if I am kept here."

"We don't take people in here to make them insane, but to cure them. This is one of the finest institutions in the State."

"I will pay you well, if you will let me out."

"Your mother will pay me better for keeping you in."

"My mother! my mother!" cried the astonished man; then he paused and stared! "My mother! Ah! Did my mother send me here?" And his bosom heaved, and big tears rolled down his cheek; he fell back at last in despair. How long he lay he knew not, but when he awoke he was sobered from intoxication.

"My mother!" he said, as he gazed at the barred window with his waking eyes, and looking out upon the world which he had lost. "My mother!" That name seemed like a sweet bird to him; a bird of hope and love. A bird with bright wings and fair plumage; but alas! to be seen no more! That bird of motherly hope seemed just flown out of that window, never to return. He gazed and gazed, and poured out his thoughts towards the blue sky in utter despair. "My mother! could she do it! Ah! alas! I have no mother! She is not my mother! She has disowned me! I have no hope, no friend on earth now."

And from that moment Frank Gildersleeve lost all spirit, and resolved to die. Day by day he grew thin and pale, his head bowed, his heart fainting, his spirits drooping like a clipped bird that had fallen from the soaring flock with no more courage to rise. Once more only did he mount to that window, gaze upon the Capitol dome, see Beacon Hill, witness the shades of his home, and the fortune, the fountains and trees which he was never more to enjoy.

A telegram was sent to the mother, "If you don't come soon, you will not see your son alive." That proud mother did not come, and the poor boy died among strangers. By stranger hands his eyes were closed. By stranger hands laid into his coffin, and by stranger feet followed to the tomb. By stranger hands settled to his last resting-place, by stranger hands the sod is covered.

Thus died the eloquent, the gifted, the handsome, the generous Frank Gildersleeve. Died in sight of his fortune, his home, and of Harvard's halls he once adorned; died without a watcher or a friend.

Why did he fall? Why? Because of culture without a conscience. Because of liberalism. "Go-as-you-please" doctrines of life. It teaches no self-denial. No heroic self-sacrifice. It sets up the decanter in place of the altar. Science for religion. Molecules for God. It gives no warning to the ungodly. If your house is on fire, it sounds no alarm. If a drawbridge is open, gives no signal; no warning. No streets marked "dangerous." No tide water to shut the gates of sin. Pulpits must stand with Quaker guns and blank cartridges, never firing upon the advancing foe, never striking

the thunder-clap of reform. So I am blamed, harshly blamed, for making this exposure, revealing Boston's sins and sounding the tocsin of alarm!

One time Frank was serious. It was at D. L. Moody's Tabernacle meetings. He felt himself lost and wished to be saved. Then it was that a certain liberal preacher assailed the evangelist and his work.

His pulpit had no Quaker guns now. The shots were hot and heavy. But alas! they were fired, not against the foe, but against the Redeemer's kingdom. Oh, what a blow was that to the hopes of the lost! Christ's own blood-redeemed fort, turned against its builder! Why choose a pulpit to assail the Bible? Why take a church? Why call yourself Christian? Ah! you know that the fodder comes only through the fold of the Shepherd. So you stay for the fodder and starve the sheep. Why not take a hall and call it by a heathen name? Go under true colors? Ah, then you couldn't sustain yourself twelve months, and you know it! Oh! Christianity! Christianity! What foes assume thy garb! What shepherds fatten in thy pastures!

Those assaults upon the saving grace of God met with rounds of applause. Kid-gloved gentry clapped their hands! Gold-headed canes came down with a "thump"! Excited men with brandy breaths whispered, "That is preaching for me!" Why does such a man take \$5,000 a year for pulling down what he cannot build up in fifty years? Why stand inside the walls to fire your Master's fort? Why not come down, come out! Stand on your manhood, not on a borrowed name! Go with your class! Go where the fifty-and-four have already gone in Boston. Gone into retirement. Gone where the "woodbine twineth."

Frank's mother fell in with the views of Moody's assailant. Her son saved by grace? No, never! Better not be saved at all. So he died! But extremes meet and vibrate. Beacon Hill drifts towards Catholicism. Frank's sister, Gertrude, is all devotion, in fact, she is crazed with church mania. She intends to abandon the world, join a convent, and give the Gildersleeve estate to the charities of the church. We will see: time will determine.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MINNIE FOUND AT LAST.—PATHETIC MEETING OF CHILD AND PARENTS.

"I want my daughter!" said Mrs. John Marston, as she violently rang the door-bell of Chastini's house.

"What, the girl that tried to p'ison herself, eh?" cried the door-maid.

"Unfeeling woman! Don't talk of poison! Show me my child!" shrieked the distracted mother.

"Well, go up to room four, second flight; there you'll find her, dying or dead!"

But old John Marston, hearing her voice, met his wife at the door.

"Oh! John! John! Is Minnie alive? Will she know me?" said Mrs. Marston, reeling into the house.

"Wife, be calm!" said the old man, as he held her in his arms. "Minnie is still alive, and may yet recover."

"Thank God! Thank God! That I shall see her alive! Thank God! That I can comfort my child for a single hour. But what has brought her to this? What ails my poor Minnie?"

"Wife," said the old man, soothingly, "our poor girl has suffered a great and cruel wrong!"

"Wrong! Oh! my God! Don't say that! Don't tell me that Minnie has been led astray!"

"Alas, yes! 'Tis so. The wolf has seized upon our lamb!"

"Oh! Who is the villain! Where is he? Tell me! Tell me! I will hunt him to the ends of the earth! He shall know a mother's indignation! Shall feel the blight of a mother's curse! Oh! Oh!" wringing her hands and shrieking in agony.

"Be calm, wife, I pray. 'Twas not Minnie's fault. She erred not wilfully. She was deceived, thought she was married, was brought to this house and deserted. Here her child was born."

"Her child! Oh! heavens!"

"Yes, and she never saw its face. While she was unconscious they carried the babe away."

"Oh! how cruel! inhuman! Oh, to suffer so much and I not be by her side! Deserted in her hour of need! Left to strangers' care! No fond mother to cheer and comfort her! Oh! Minnie!

Minnie! My poor wronged darling! What sufferings, what agony, only a mother knows! Oh! Take me to my child! Let us go at once!"

"You are too excited, wife. Wait till you are calm."

"Calm! Calm! Ask the whirlwinds to be calm! Ask the cataract to keep silent! Then ask a mother robbed of her only child, and that child dying within hearing of her voice, — ask her to suppress her emotions. No! no! my husband, you ask too much! The very rocks and stones cry out!"

"But if it be to save a child's life!"

"Oh, yes! I know, I know," changing her tone. "Oh! I will be so calm, I will keep so still, I will walk so softly, not a breath, not a word shall she hear." Tears falling like rain.

"There, there! that will do; wait a moment."

"Oh! I cannot wait, John!" said the agitated mother. "I will not be denied the sight of my child. She said room four on the second flight, did she not?"

And Mrs. Marston, while speaking, without waiting for an answer, advanced quickly to the staircase. John Marston, scarcely less agitated than his wife, placed his hand on her arm.

"You — you will be kind and tender to her, wife!" he said.

"Kind and tender, John!" she repeated, reproachfully. "Could I be harsh and cruel to our child who is at this moment, perhaps, hovering on the border of the grave? No! No! I will take her to my bosom and let our Minnie see that her mother is the same to her as ever!"

The mother dashed up the two flights, opened the door, and saw upon the bed a female form with hair dishevelled, but with face so pale, so attenuated that she cried in amazement, "Oh, this is not my child, it cannot be my daughter!" And she gazed doubtfully upon the ghastly, sunken features, so unlike the lovely countenance of her dear Minnie. "No! no!" she said, hesitatingly, "it is not my daughter! it cannot be my Minnie! my Minnie! my dear Minnie!"

Ah! that word "Minnie! Minnie!" falling on the dull, cold ear of the prostrate girl, was as a voice from the spirit world. "Minnie! Minnie!" The words thrilled her senses; then her heart beat anew, then a twitch of the nerve, a quick throb of the pulse, a long breath, a sigh, a shudder, and all was still again.

"Minnie! Minnie! do you know me?" Still that word "Minnie! Minnie!" found response in the chords of her soul, like the

long silent strings of an Æolian harp swept by spirit hands. At its first whispers, her half-conscious spirit was wandering back to the granite hills. Back to the heights of Dixville Notch, to father and mother, to warbling brooks and falling cataracts; to the music of pine-trees, the song of birds, and all the sweet associations of childhood, innocence, and home.

Then, in a twinkling, the vision brought her to the perils of the city. Her first sight of Frank Gildersleeve, the plot in the dentist's office, the mock marriage, as she feared it was, her refusal of the proffered cup in Chastini's house, her desertion by Frank, the cries and groans of other victims, the suspicious wagon at the door, her escape, her despair at finding no testimony, no witnesses to her marriage, her concealment of all her wrongs, like the wounded dove that covers with its finest feathers the bleeding hurt, striving to hide it from view. Then she recalled her despair, her distrust of God, her desperate act in taking the fatal poison, her pain, her excruciating agony, her hundred deaths in one, shut out from every friend, — all this came before her, making her senses like the huddled visions of a drowning man, when that familiar voice breathing the words, "Minnie! dear Minnie!" fell upon her ear.

Slowly and painfully she opened her eyes. Then gazing dreamily upward for a moment, what did she see? What form? What face? Whose swimming eyes? There, bending over her like an angel from heaven, was a form whose features were sweeter than the sunlight of day!

"Oh! Minnie! Minnie! Do you know me?"

"Ah!" said the young girl, starting up. Where am I? Who calls my name? Am I awake? Am I dreaming? Ah, heavens! Can it be? Can it be? Mother! MOTHER!" her voice rising to a shriek, as the certainty that it *was* her mother suddenly burst upon her soul. And with sobs and tears and low, broken cries of affection, the mother and daughter were clasped in each other's arms. At length Minnie said, —

"Oh! mother! Have you come? Have you indeed found me?"

"My darling one! My dear, dear child! Why, oh, why did you ever leave your childhood's home?" And Mrs. Marston in vain tried to check her tears.

"Oh! would to God I had stayed with you and father, and never come to Boston!" murmured the sick girl.

"But why did you not write, Minnie? Think of our anxiety, our dreadful, dreadful fears for your safety!"

"Oh, forgive me, forgive me, dear mother. But I could not write. I could not write. I dared not write to *you* the story of my sorrows! I feared it would break your heart,—that it would kill you! But, oh! mother, dear, believe me, when I say your daughter was not guilty, until despair drove her to seek her own life!"

"Oh! I *do* believe you, my child."

"And you will pardon and forgive me, mother?"

"Oh! my child, how little you know a mother's heart! Pardon, forgive you! Oh, with all my heart! With all my soul! And may God forgive you; may He consider your youth, your desperation, your absence from friends, your hitherto good and blameless life!"

"Oh! dearest mother, you bring the only peace and comfort that my heart has known for many, many weeks! Thank God, I lived to see you once more! To feel your dear arms around me! To lay my weary head upon your bosom! Oh! mother, if you only knew how much I have suffered; what bitter, bitter tears I have shed; what utter loneliness and despair have been mine! Oh! then you would know how cruelly I was beset! How irresistibly driven to this wicked and reckless deed."

"Do not speak of it, my child," said the sobbing mother, tenderly taking Minnie's head upon her breast. "Oh! how I pity and love you, my own dear Minnie!"

For a few moments only the sounds of sobs and low uttered words of tenderness and affection, were heard in the room. Then the door was softly opened, and John Marston, leaning on his staff, his aged frame shaking with emotion, came tottering toward the couch. Without the power of words, he bent down, and folded his weeping child to his heart.

"Father! dear father!" said Minnie, when she could speak, "this is a greater happiness than I dared hope for. Oh! father, can you forgive your wicked, sinful daughter?"

"Yes, yes, my child; I do forgive you. I have sought you for weeks throughout this great city. I have passed toilsome days and anxious, sleepless nights in my search. It was to save you, to rescue and to forgive you, my girl,—more sinned against than sinning,—that I devoted myself to finding you. God has heard my prayer. The lost is found! Praise, praise forever to His holy name!"

"Dear, dear father!"

"But where, where," John Marston suddenly cried, "where is

the base man who deceived and abandoned you? Where is this double-dyed villain?"

"Oh, father," said Minnie, tremulously, "I pray you will spare him! Do not speak harshly of — of the man I loved. He is beyond all earthly punishment, for," and the poor girl burst into a passion of tears, — for he is dead!"

"Dead!" cried both father and mother.

"Yes. Since I have lain here on my bed of sickness, I have been told that Frank Gildersleeve died miserably, wretchedly in an asylum for the insane! And I — I his betrothed, his wife, could not be at his side, could not listen to his dying words!"

"God's will be done!" said the old man, solemnly, raising his eyes to heaven. "He has passed beyond the power of all earthly tribunals. May God have mercy on him!"

"Oh! Do you forgive him, father?" said Minnie, clasping her hands. "Then you will forgive your unhappy daughter? Father! father!" she cried, with sudden agony, take me in your arms once more! I am dying, I feel that I am dying, dear father? Kiss me as you used to kiss me when a little child! Press me to your heart again!" Her voice grew weak and faint.

"No! no! You shall not die!" cried the heart-broken father. "Minnie! Minnie! look at me!" He raised her head upon his breast; her breath came feebly, the soft eyelids fell. "Minnie! Minnie! speak to me! I am your father! Merciful God! Have I found my child only to lose her? She must not, shall not die! Help! help! help!"

The startled servants rushed into the room. "Run for a doctor, quick! My child is dying!"

The doctor entered and applied restoratives, and quieted their fears. Minnie revived.

"Ah! It is not a dream! It *is* you, father," she murmured. "I thought you had dreamt you had found me! Thank God, I shall not die among strangers!"

"Don't talk of dying, Minnie. It will break my heart to have you die. Live, my darling! Live for your mother's sake. Live for your poor old father's sake!"

"Alas! father, I fear there is no hope! Alas! it is too late!"

But it was not too late. Minnie Marston was snatched from the very jaws of death. Antidotes had been promptly administered when she first took the poison.

Then that father and mother fell upon their knees, and lifting

up their hearts in prayer, thanked God that they had found their child alive.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.—GERTRUDE'S VISIONS.

"Faix, miss, do ye belave in ghosts?" asked Mike the coachman, as Gertrude Gildersleeve, returning from a journey, alighted from the carriage at the door of the family's country residence.

"No, Michael, I do not. Why do you ask me?"

"Faith, all the sarvants are scared to death, miss," said Mike with a solemn shake of his head. "They are howling, 'Holy murder! The house is haunted.'"

"Haunted? Ridiculous!" said Gertrude.

As Gertrude entered the house, she heard the servants wildly complaining to her mother.

"Oh, mum, I want me wages, I want me wages!" cried Bridget, the new housenaid.

"Oh! Holy Virgin, mum, the house is haunted—haunted!" exclaimed Mrs. Murphy, the cook, rolling her eyes in terror.

"Oh! marm, such ghosts!" ejaculated Arabella, the parlormaid.

"Silence!" cried Mrs. Gildersleeve. "What does this mean?"

"Oh, mamma," exclaimed Gertrude, "Michael says the house is haunted."

"Och! mum, an'so it is, it is!" said Bridget.

"Oh! mum, I wouldn't stay in the house another blessed night for a million dollars," murmured Mrs. Murphy.

"No, indeed, not for ten million," put in Arabella.

"Silence!" again cried Mrs. Gildersleeve. "I will have no more of this nonsense." And she retired to her room.

That night Mrs. Gildersleeve and Gertrude lie in slumber. The servant girls, wild with affright, are crouched in one small room, trembling and sobbing among themselves. The night, starless and still, shrouds the earth in impenetrable darkness. Suddenly a shower of gravel strikes the shutters of the house, as if thrown by human hand. Door-bells ring. The windows rattle. The wild cries of a

strange animal are heard as he dashes down the path. The front door mysteriously opens and a gust of wind rushes through the house. Footsteps are heard on the stairs. Pat, pat, pat, they echo through the halls. Nearer, nearer they come. A thundering knock on the servants' door, and a wailing voice muttering hollow imprecations.

"Oh! Holy Mother!" screams Bridget, crossing herself, and struggling to get behind her two companions.

"Oh! saints presarve us! I'm kilt! I'm kilt intirely!" moans Mrs. Murphy.

"G—go 'way," implores Arabella, in a faint voice.

"Oh! murder! murder!" "Sind for a praist! sind for a praist!" "Oh! Mr. Ghost! I'll *never* stale anuther pound of sugar or tay from missus; *never*! NIVER!" are the cries of terror and affright from the servants' room.

Hark! a piercing cry of woe and sorrow rings through the house. Gertrude, lying in dreamless sleep, awakens with a start. A strange fear steals over her spirit. She peers into the darkness. Creak! creak! creak! goes her chamber door. Footfalls approach her bedside; a shadowy form looms up; an icy hand is slowly stretched forth and laid on her fair young forehead. And with a remorseful voice ringing in her ears, Gertrude starts up, and wildly shrieking, falls back insensible.

The cry of Gertrude awakens Mrs. Gildersleeve. She listens. Hark! That pat, pat, pat of unknown footsteps approaches her room. The door, as if by a gust of wind, is blown violently open. A sulphurous odor permeates the apartment. An unaccountable dread seizes her proud soul. "Woe! woe! woe!" wails a voice of sorrow, and a dim white figure, waving its hand in solemn warning, points downward to hell.

"Oh! mamma!" cried Gertrude, in the morning, "this house I really believe *is* haunted."

"Nonsense, child!" said Mrs. Gildersleeve, with assumed indifference, yet inwardly troubled.

"But it is," persisted Gertrude; "a strange, white form entered my room last night, and placed its cold, icy hand on my brow. Oh! I was *so* frightened!"

"Ridiculous," said Mrs. Gildersleeve. "There are no ghosts."

In the kitchen, Bridget was saying, —

"Och! Bejabers! I wunt stay anuther day in this house, so I wunt."

"'T was the devil himself. I seed his two eyes a-flaming, and his cloven fut a-stickin' out," put in Arabella, shuddering.

Mrs. Flaherty, the coachman's wife, entered the room.

"Oh! The Virgin save us!" cried she, crossing herself, and sinking down in a chair. "I'm nigh a-frightened out of my seven sinses, I am."

"And we is, marm, likewise," said Bridget. "Oh! such sights, such carryings-on! Enough to scare the Holy Mother herself, God bless her!"

"Sure, it's jist es I towld ye. Faix, it's the spirits of Mr. Gildersleeve and poor Mr. Frank, so it is. Sure it's in Purgatory they are!" gasped Mrs. Flaherty. "'It's in torments they are, 'cause no masses were said for their wicked sows."

"Faith, mum, ye're right, ye are," cried Mrs. Murphy, holding up her hands in horror. "Sure it's in Purgatory they is; an' the owld lady wunt let them git out. A hundred masses wud do a power of good, they wud that."

"Pshaw!" scoffed Arabella. "Masses ain't no good."

"Howld ye tongue, ye heretic ye!" cried Bridget, sharply.

"Oh! faix the owld lady is too mean, too mighty stingy to say masses for their poor, lost sows, that she is," said Mrs. Murphy, shaking her head wisely.

"Mean!" echoed Bridget. "Faith, she'd see us all eat up alive afore *she'd* pay for howly masses."

"Oh! if Father Titus was only here!" exclaimed Mrs. Murphy. "He'd tell us what's the matter, he would."

"Faith, mum, an' he will be," said Mrs. Flaherty. "He tould me he were a comin' to see me to-day; and sure there he is right at my door." And Mrs. Flaherty flew out to meet Father Titus at the coachman's house in the yard.

"Lord bless ye, Father Titus," cried Mrs. Flaherty. "It's jes the right time ye have come it is. Miss Gertrude hes jes gut home, an' is almost frightened to death with the ghosts, she is. She wants to see ye, oh! iver so much, an' I'll go right off an' fetch her, an' I wunt tell her mother, so I wunt."

Gertrude enters, burdened and pale. "Oh! Holy Father! she cries. "It is not for myself I plead. My dear father's spirit is in torment. I am sure his spirit appeared to me last night. He laid his icy hand upon my brow and said, 'Child! child! oh! will you not relieve my soul from Purgatory?' With that he vanished. My mother does not believe in such things. She is opposed to our

Holy Catholic church; opposed to my seeing you or attending the church. She thinks I am infatuated. Ah! poor mother! How little she knows! But oh, Father, if you ever had pity on a poor, stricken child, a child worse than an orphan, oh! intercede for me."

"My child! Put your trust in the Blessed Virgin. She will protect and care for you. You may yet be one of her favored children, a virgin nun, a saint of God."

"I will! I will!" cried Gertrude, fervidly. "Oh! I feel I am weak and sinful. Alas! I joined with my mother to send poor Frank to the insane retreat, and feel as if I were partly the cause of his sad death. Oh! Holy Father! Pray for me! Pray for me! Oh! pray for the spirits of my father and brother, that they may be relieved from torment."

"At this moment Mrs. Flaherty came rushing in. "Oh! Blessed Father!" she cried in terror. "Mrs. Gildersleeve is a-comin'!"

Father Titus looked embarrassed. But there was no time for him to conceal himself.

"How dare you mislead my daughter?" thundered Mrs. Gildersleeve, confronting the astonished priest. "How dare you meet her here unknown to me? I know your secret motives, your selfish plans. I more than suspect that you are at the bottom of the disturbance at my house last night. It is part of your schemes. But they shall be foiled. The deep wiles of Catholicism shall never ensnare *my* daughter, sir. Soon my child will be worth a million. That million you seek. But you s'all never have a dollar of it! You demand high mass for my husband at \$100. When that sum is paid, his soul, through your machinations, will be crying for another \$100. No, sir, I am a Transcendentalist. I believe in neither Virgin, priest, nor Purgatory. Begone, let your face never, never darken these doors again!"

For once Father Titus was disconcerted. He could say nothing.

"Oh! mamma! mamma! you kill me! you kill me!" sobbed Gertrude, and she fell fainting to the floor.

"Too bad!" said Sambo to himself, walking up and down the hall as Gertrude was brought in senseless from the coachman's house, and carried tenderly to her room. "It's jes too bad dat dis yer Jeswit priest should come it so ober poor Miss Gertrude. Pizenin' her mind wid such stuff an' nonsense! Talk 'bout de Virgin Mary! Jes as if she could hear all de eighty t'ousand prayers all ober de world! Why, she wa'n't only de *erfly* mudder ob de

bressed Lord Jesus. Humph! Guess some ob dem prayers have ter come way up froo de erf, t'ousand an' t'ousand ob miles 'fore dey reach her ear. An' to t'ink Miss Gertrude, an edicated young leddy like her, can beliebe such humbug!"

Sambo increased his pace, taking long strides, and swinging his arms excitedly.

"Oh! poor, poor Miss Gertrude!" Sambo continued. "I jes wish I could do somefin' or udder for de sweet young missy. De-cler' ef it don't jes break my ole heart to see such goin's-on. Suah as de world Fader Titus is jes arter de money — in coorse he is, de wicked, artful priest! Guess I knows him, yis sah! I knows he cause all de ghost, de noise, an' all de trubble. Ef missus ud jes frow out dat ar coachman's wife, dat ar Mrs. Flaherty, I reck'n dis yer ghost business wud be stopped, mighty quick! Let dem come an' see ef dar be any ghosts a-comin' to *my* room. No, dey dasn't! I'd fro dem out de window, I wud, so dey ud tink de wicked one hisself was arter dem. Oh! poor Miss Gertrude! Dey is treatin' you shameful, dey is. Dis yere ghost an' de howlin' an' de futsteps is all a sham, it is. It's too berry, berry bad, it is. An I'll jes go an' tell missus w'at I t'inks ob it, I will." And the aroused Sambo approached the door of Mrs. Gildersleeve's room.

"Oh! mamma! The vision! I see a cross! I see a white veil, now a black veil! What does it mean, mamma?" Gertrude, lying pale and weak on the sofa, was crying as Sambo entered the room. "Oh! look! The Virgin stretches out her arms to receive me. Hark! I hear sounds of celestial music. The heavens open! I see the pearly gates! Oh, joy! joy! mamma! But, ah! The vision changes. Angels point downward to a dark and terrible abyss. I see forms writhing in awful misery! Oh! I see my brothers and my dear, dear father. They beckon to me, beg and pray me to release their stricken spirits, to renounce the world and give my soul to God! Oh, mamma! I will! I will!"

"Hush! child! you are dreaming," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, laying her hand on the fevered brow of her daughter.

"No, mamma, it's *real*! There! The Holy Virgin beckons, beckons! Angels hover round me. Hark! mamma! Oh! mamma! Papa, papa is calling for release from torment. Oh! *mea culpa! mea culpa! mea maxima culpa!* The holy priest has left me! Oh, mamma! He can save us, save poor papa! Oh! call him back! call him back!" And Gertrude upstarting, fell back on the bed insensible.

"Gertrude! Gertrude!" cried Mrs. Gildersleeve, bending tenderly over her daughter. Speak to me! speak to me!"

Gertrude slowly opened her eyes. "The priest! the priest!" she murmured.

"Father Titus! I cannot let him enter this house again," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, sternly.

"Oh, mamma! do not say so," sobbed Gertrude. "Oh! send for him! send for him, and ask his forgiveness."

"No, I cannot!" said Mrs. Gildersleeve.

"Oh, mamma! do not be cruel" pleaded Gertrude, the tears glistening in her fair blue eyes. "Do not kill me, mamma; do not kill me!"

"Listen, Gertrude," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, determinedly. "This priest has selfish designs. His motives are evil. I cannot consent to his presence here."

"Oh, no, mamma!" cried Gertrude. "He is not wicked. He is good, he is good; I know he is! Oh! send for him! Send for him!"

Mrs. Gildersleeve sternly shook her head.

"Oh, mamma! mamma!" implored Gertrude, stretching out her hands pleadingly. "Do not refuse me! Oh! do not refuse your only child!" And Gertrude, grasping weakly at her mother's hand, again fainted.

"Mrs. Gildersleeve's proud spirit began to yield. The sight of Gertrude's anguish touched her heart. She could withstand her daughter's entreaties no longer.

"Gertrude! Gertrude!" she cried. But Gertrude answered never a word.

"Oh, woe! woe is me!" sighed Mrs. Gildersleeve. "My only child has turned against me. She will not speak to me. Oh, Gertrude! Gertrude!" and the proud mother sank in a chair, and buried her face in her hands, sobbing convulsively.

Suddenly Mrs. Gildersleeve arose and stepped to the door. She directed that Father Titus be sent to her. Soon his portly figure entered the hallway, and he approached the room where Gertrude lay.

"Sir," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, saluting him coldly, "My daughter is infatuated with you and your church. She lies sick and troubled, perhaps nigh unto death. Therefore I allow her wish to see you. For myself, I disapprove of the religion you teach." And Mrs. Gildersleeve swept from the room, leaving the father alone with Gertrude.

"My daughter!" said the priest in a low voice, approaching her bedside, "how is it with thee?"

"Oh, Father Titus! have you come?" cried Gertrude, making an effort to rise, a pleased look on her face. "Oh! I am *so* glad! Oh! forgive poor mother! she knew not what she did."

"Gertrude," said the priest in solemn tones, "all, all depends on you. You can save your mother, redeem the spirits of your father and brothers from out the fearful depths of Purgatory. You and you alone can do this. You are the Virgin's choice. Listen to the voice of your heart. Obey its promptings. Renounce the world; accept the divine grace which the church extends to you. Assume those vows which shall clothe you as with new life. Then your prayers will have weight with heaven. Then shall you be the savior of the souls of your kindred, your name placed high on the roll of the true daughters of the church, canonized perchance as a saint in heaven."

"Oh! Holy Father" murmured Gertrude in rapture.

"Take the veil; consecrate your life to the church. Enter upon the blissful ways of the cloister, and all will be well," said the priest in fervid tones. "But," and he frowned sternly, "if you reject the Virgin, denounce the church—oh! woe! woe! woe! to your unhappy soul!" and Father Titus, apparently overcome at the thought, shook with affected grief and pity.

"Oh! Father! Father!" implored Gertrude, trembling at such a fate. "Renounce the church? *Never!*"

"No, my child, I have faith in you. You are pure, lovely, good. You will do as the Lord wills."

"I will! I will!" cried Gertrude, fervently.

"It is well. The Virgin smiles upon you. The heavens open and record your vow. Oh! my daughter! You shall shine as a jewel on the brow of your Redeemer, and shall go no more out forever."

He bent down, touched his lips to the pure forehead of the young girl, and blessing her, took his departure, promising to return and see her the next day.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JERKS TO THE RESCUE.—THE PROUD MOTHER HUMBLLED.

Mrs. Gildersleeve was seated alone in her sitting-room, a prey to bitter thoughts.

"Plaze, ma'am," said the servant, entering, "a man wants to spake wid yez. His name, he sez, is Jerks."

"Conduct him here," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, quickly, animated by a sudden premonition that Jerks's visit had some portentous signification; and the next moment Jonathan entered the room.

"How du you du, ma'am?" said Jonathan, as he seated himself. "I should n't intrude on you at such a distressing time, but I have a very important communication to make to you."

"It is no intrusion, Mr. Jerks," said the lady, kindly and with a faint smile. "I remembered your name at once. You accompanied my family on our European trip last year, I believe. You — you took a very kind interest in my daughter, if I mistake not, during the voyage over?"

"Wal, yes, Mrs. Gildersleeve," said Jerks, nervously fingering the rim of his hat, his manner indicating some unusual indecision. "I did and *do* take considerable interest in M^{ss} Gertrude, if you will pardon me for sayin' so; particularly now that —"

And here Jerks hesitated, and became so embarrassed that Mrs. Gildersleeve came to his rescue.

"You refer to the — the calamities which have overtaken my family of late, do you not?"

She tried to speak the words steadily, but she was unable to control a certain huskiness of voice; and in spite of the long habit of concealing her emotions, she could not prevent the muscles of her face from twitching convulsively.

"Yes, ma'am," said Jerks, observing these tokens, and pitying the proud but stricken woman from the bottom of his heart, "I was thinkin' of all your troubles, but I didn't mean to speak of 'em quite so bluntly. I forgot, for the moment, that I was comparatively a stranger to you."

"And yet," said Mrs. Gildersleeve, gently, "I cannot look upon you entirely as such, Mr. Jerks. My husband was accustomed to speak of you in very high terms. I shall never forget that he told me how you earnestly cautioned him about my unfortunate son. I confess that at the time I looked upon your kindness in a very dif-

ferent light from what I have done since. Oh!" — she continued with an involuntary burst of emotion that was beyond all powers of control, — "oh! if we had but listened to your well-meant advice! Oh! if we had but heeded and read aright those signs which were meant to warn us that our only boy was drifting out into a dangerous sea, whose shores are forever strewn with youthful wreck and disaster! Oh! if our eyes had only been opened to this awful peril, he might have been saved! He might have been an honorable, an upright and worthy man, the staff and support of my declining years. Instead of which, behold me a broken-hearted woman, aged before my time, bereft in one year, in one short year, of husband and children, — hopeless, miserable, wretched, oh! so utterly, so utterly wretched!"

Ah! it was pitiful to see this woman, once so cold, so proud, so thoroughly self-contained, in whose bosom the voice of nature had been stifled for so long that she seemed to be devoid of every softening and humanizing feeling. Ah! it was pitiful to see her thus, in an unguarded moment, abandon herself to the wild excesses of a grief and sorrow in which dwelt no gleam of hope, no spark of comfort!

Jonathan's heart bled for the stricken woman. He tried to offer her some consolation.

"At least, Mrs. Gildersleeve," he said, "you have still a daughter, upon whose love and devotion I am sure you may rely."

These words, instead of assuaging, seemed only to increase her anguish. She wrung her hands wildly as she cried, —

"No! not even that drop of comfort is left me! My daughter — my Gertrude, the one object on earth upon whom I have lavished the affection of my whole heart — my pride, my glory, my idol — yes, whom I have worshipped blindly as the heathen worships his god, — my Gertrude turns against me, forsakes me; cuts asunder the dearest tie that might yet reconcile me to my lonely lot! Yes, my daughter shrinks from me — me, her mother — to embrace a delusion, a religion which assumes to supply the place of all worldly interests and every natural tie of affection."

"What!" exclaimed Jerks, in sorrowful surprise. "Has Miss Gertrude gone so far as actually to have taken the veil?"

"You have heard, then, of her intention? No. She has not yet consummated her mistaken purpose, but she has gone so far that retreat is now impossible; and I, — oh! heavenly Father! — I, I, her mother, was powerless to prevent the step!"

"Take hope, then, ma'am!" cried Jonathan, in electric tones, and springing to his feet, while Mrs. Gildersleeve's saddened countenance lightened up and she leaned forward with a look of breathless expectation. "I came here to reveal to you a matter that I hope and believe will save your daughter; emancipate her from a slavery both of soul and body, that her poor nature would shrink from as from the deadliest contagion, if she but knew the half of what it requires and exacts."

And in hurried words Jerks related to Mrs. Gildersleeve the story of Rose Delaney which he had heard from her husband's lips; showed her that this same priest, whose casuistry, zeal, and pertinacity had so wrought upon the wavering and disturbed religious convictions of Gertrude, that she had at length not only adopted the Roman Catholic religion as her own, but had come to regard Father Titus as a veritable saint upon earth, good, pure, holy as the apostles themselves. Jonathan thus exhibited the priest in all his moral hideousness and deformity. As he concluded, Mrs. Gildersleeve, trembling at the danger to which her daughter had been subjected, yet relieved as she thought of Gertrude's innate purity and delicacy which she felt were sufficient to guard her from that danger, hastily rose to her feet and came towards Jerks.

"Where is this girl Rose?" she asked.

"Will you see her?" asked Jerks. "Will you listen to the story from her own lips? Will you, further than this, permit this repentant woman to see your daughter, and perhaps move her to renounce her intention of entering a convent?"

Once towering like the mountain oak, now bending like the willow, Mrs. Gildersleeve seemed as if she were about to prostrate herself at Jonathan's feet, humbling herself as she had never done before, even to her Maker; but instead of yielding to the impulse, she seized both his hands, while the tears streamed from eyes that had rarely known such tender suffusion, as she murmured brokenly, —

"Oh! You have given me new hope, new life! May God forever bless you for bringing this comfort to a broken, despairing heart! Thanks to you, my daughter, my idolized Gertrude, is saved! I feel it, know it! But where is this girl Rose? Oh! bring her to me at once. In mercy's name, let there not be another moment's delay!"

And almost frantic with mingled joy and fear, Mrs. Gildersleeve sprang to her feet, and urged Jonathan toward the door. But the latter had not yet accomplished his entire object.

"I have not yet told you all, Mrs. Gildersleeve," he said, pausing at the door.

She looked inquiringly at him.

"Rose Delaney is not far away, and ready to second our efforts whenever she is summoned to do so," Jerks continued. "Let your mind be at rest on that point, Mrs. Gildersleeve."

"But why delay, then, to bring her here?" demanded the lady anxiously. "Oh! hasten at once, dear Mr. Jerks. Every moment is precious. Even now this priest may call and demand to see my daughter. "Oh! remember she is all that is left to me on earth!"

"Not so, Mrs. Gildersleeve. She is not the only one that claims your affection and duty," said Jerks.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that there is one, cruelly, foully wronged, yet pure and innocent as an angel, who has asked me to intercede with you in her behalf. One who once came to you, expecting womanly sympathy and womanly aid, but whom you, in your day of pride, drove from your door with insult and reproach. One who now, in your day of sorrow, yearns to love and bless you and yield you the duty of a true and faithful child!"

Mrs. Gildersleeve looked upon him like one mystified, yet a glimpse of the truth slowly dawned on her mind, as she said, —

"Speak plainly. I know not to what you refer."

"I refer to your dead son's *wife*!" said Jerks, slowly.

"My son's — Frank's — wife?" she repeated. "He had no wife. Frank Gildersleeve was *never* married!"

"Mrs. Gildersleeve," said Jerks, solemnly, "Minnie Marston was as truly and legally your son's wife, and is as truly and legally your son's widow, as that I am standing here at this moment."

"Oh may heaven forgive me, then, for the wrong I unconsciously have done her," said Mrs. Gildersleeve. "Oh! believe me, sir, my conscience has sorely tortured me for my harshness to that poor girl. Her sweet face has been in my mind oftener than I could tell. But I thought I was doing right when I treated her so. I believed she was an impostor, seeking to trade on some hold which she had obtained over my reckless son. But are you sure of what you say, Mr. Jerks?"

"I have seen the certificate of her marriage to your son properly recorded," said Jerks. "It was providentially recovered and sent to her by a friend of your son's, Dr. Richard Forceps, to whom, I am afraid, Frank Gildersleeve owed more of his evil ways than will

ever be known. I know not his motive. Perhaps even in his evil heart may exist some touch of humanity, and in some penitent mood he perhaps was moved to do this act of justice."

For a few moments Mrs. Gildersleeve did not speak. What was passing in that heart, still perhaps not wholly devoid of the worldly pride which had caused so much misery to herself and to others, may never be known. Evidently she was undergoing some severe mental combat. At last she said, gently,—

"I would like to see *my daughter*, Mr. Jerks,— my poor son's wife. I would like to fall on my knees and beg her to forgive me, to forgive *him*, and suffer me to take her to my heart!"

"And let us hope, Mrs. Gildersleeve," said Jerks, kindly, "that God, who has stricken you, may now bless you with a new affection, another daughter to love and honor you."

And so saying, Jonathan left the house.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

GERTRUDE'S INFATUATION.—A CONVENT OR THE TOMB.

Gertrude Gildersleeve lying upon her couch, her eyes closed, her hands clasped upon her bosom, a smile of angelic peace and tranquillity on her youthful countenance,— such was the scene that was presented to Mrs. Gildersleeve as she hastily entered her daughter's apartment.

Her eagerness received a sudden check as she beheld Gertrude. The rigidity of the young girl's limbs, the waxen pallor of her face, the folded hands, the closed eyelids, altogether looked so fearfully suggestive of death, that the frightened mother paused for an instant, and then involuntarily uttered a startled cry as she flew to the bedside.

"Gertrude! Gertrude!" she exclaimed, shaking her daughter's arm, in great agitation.

Gertrude opened her eyes, but seeing her mother bending so anxiously over her, extended her arms and gently wound them about the latter's neck.

"What is it, dear mamma?" she asked. "Why did you cry out in that manner?"

"Oh! You frightened me almost to death, my child. I thought— I thought something ailed you."

"Oh, on the contrary, mamma, I never was so well and so happy in my life."

And Gertrude, as if to convince her parent how strong she felt, slowly arose from the couch. She was more feeble than she was willing to admit. The scenes she had so recently passed through had greatly told upon her delicate frame. But this she did not wish her mother to perceive.

"You gave me such a shock, Gertrude," said Mrs. Gildersleeve. "But I am strangely unnerved to-day. The least thing completely upsets me. I think we both need a change of scene. This house, the surroundings and associations, are too full of painful reminiscences. What do you say, my child, to spending a few weeks at Saratoga or Newport?"

Mrs. Gildersleeve watched her daughter narrowly while she said this.

Gertrude did not reply at once. She was reflecting how she could decline her mother's suggestion and explain the reason of her declination, without giving her too much pain. At length she said, again winding her arms around Mrs. Gildersleeve's neck and nestling closely to her, —

"Dear mamma, it grieves me to disobey you in anything; it wrings my heart to have a wish that is opposed to any wish of yours. I have always tried to be a dutiful and affectionate daughter, have I not?"

"Certainly you have, my dearest. But what does this dreadful prelude portend?" asked Mrs. Gildersleeve, well prepared, however, for what was coming, and ready with what she believed would prove a cure for her daughter's infatuation when the time should arrive for her to apply it.

"Oh!" said Gertrude, "I am so sorry, so very, very sorry to give you pain, dear mamma, but I fear I must do so. I—I am going to leave you, mamma!"

"Leave me, Gertrude?" exclaimed Mrs. Gildersleeve. "Leave your mother, who without you will have no soul to cling to, no one on earth to love and cherish?"

The pathos of these words went straight to the young girl's heart, but they had no effect on her settled purpose. Father Titus had fortified her resolution to such a degree, that she believed that nothing short of death would have power to make that resolution waver.

"Oh, dear mamma," Gertrude tearfully answered, "do you think

the parting will not be bitter to me? You are all that I, too, have left to love! But I have consecrated myself to a higher duty than even that I owe to you my mother. I have given my heart, my life, my all to the service of One who will approve my sacrifice, and teach me how infinitely sweeter are the joys and blessings of a life devoted to Him, than the uncertainties of earthly hopes and the ties of earthly affections can ever be!"

"You mean, Gertrude, that you have yielded to the solicitations of Father Titus? That you have consented to leave your home, your mother, and enter a convent?"

Gertrude bowed her head.

"I blame myself, Gertrude," Mrs. Gildersleeve continued, "I deeply blame myself for ever having permitted you to enter a Roman Catholic school, and that I have allowed this priest to visit my house. But regrets are now unavailing. The past cannot be recalled. What remains for me to do is to perform my duty, to exert my authority. Do you think I will weakly yield to this infatuation? That I will permit my only child, my dearest, my best beloved, all that God has left me, to be torn from my side, to be shut up in a cloister, and make no protest, no effort to prevent it? Oh! you mistake your mother, Gertrude Gildersleeve, if you think so for one moment!"

"Oh, mamma, do not compel me to be disobedient!" Gertrude pleaded. "If I had a doubt, if I could believe that it was possible for me to be mistaken in my choice, I would not for worlds, persist in it. I know I am yielding by nature; I have never before combated your will; you justly believe that it will only be necessary for you to command in this as in other matters, and that I will obey. But oh! dearest mamma, it is not now a question of filial regard or duty. It is a question between earth and heaven! A question affecting my heavenly salvation, and yours, and my dear father's and brother's! Oh mamma! I am convinced that I am called to perform this sacrifice by a voice which I would not, could not, *dare* not disobey."

Mrs. Gildersleeve made a gesture of impatience, almost of despair.

"Oh!" she cried, "who would credit it if it were told, that *my* daughter could so weakly, so foolishly be duped by such false and ridiculous notions as these! It is too absurd!—past all belief! How can any one in their right senses, brought up in this age of enlightenment, pin their faith upon a superstition so rank, so gross, so

debasement, so utterly opposed to the plainest teachings of common sense ! Oh ! this priest, this wicked, wicked priest ! Stealing into my house like a thief in the night, to rob me of the most precious of all my treasures ! But he shall not triumph ! ” she cried energetically, and starting up with the grandeur of an avenging Judith or an outraged Leah. “ No ! I will fight craft with craft ! Oppose cunning to cunning, force to force ! And, if all else fail, as a last resort I will appeal to the law ! ”

“ Mamma,” said Gertrude, gently and firmly, “ no threats will terrify me from following out the dictates of my conscience. All you have said, though it grieves me sorely, will not avail to move me.”

“ But it shall avail ! ” cried the excited mother, “ You are but a child, not yet of age, and the law will protect me in enforcing your obedience.”

“ Very well, mamma,” said Gertrude, still firm, though very pale. “ You can at the most only delay, but not prevent my purpose. My religion teaches patience. I shall soon be of age ! ”

“ Oh ! ” cried Mrs. Gildersleeve, almost driven wild by this calm, immovable opposition on the part of her usually docile child, impatiently wringing her hands as she paced distractedly to and fro. Oh, can it be that this bold, bad man, has gained such an ascendancy over my child ! ”

“ Please, dear mamma,” said Gertrude, greatly shocked, and flushing painfully, — “ please do not speak so unkindly of the good, the holy, the noble man whom I honor and revere above all mankind.”

“ Silly child ! You little know this priest.”

Gertrude smiled, confidently, trustfully.

“ Mamma,” she said, “ my faith in God, in the Blessed Virgin, in the holy church, is not firmer than is my faith and trust in the good Father Titus ! ”

“ But if I could prove to you, Gertrude, that this same man was one of the vilest, most despicable of God’s creatures, a shame and a scandal to God’s ministry, a hypocrite, a liar, a base schemer, an unscrupulous wretch, who, if he had his just deserts, would be held up to the scorn and execration of society, and only suffered to exist behind the stone walls and iron bars of a prison, what then would you say ? ”

Gertrude had slowly arisen at these words, poured out with all the vehement force of one thoroughly convinced of the truth of

what she asseverated. The young girl was as pallid as marble, her limbs trembled, a chill like that of death darted through her veins, her soft eyes sought her mother's with a glance frozen as if with horror, and she raised one hand with an imploring gesture. She made one or two ineffectual efforts to speak. At last the words came, low and feeble, and with a shuddering gasp,—

"It would—it would kill me, mother, to believe what you say!"

"Rather," cried Mrs. Gildersleeve, overjoyed at this unexpected effect, and seeing in it only an indication of hope,— "rather it would give you life, my child, disabuse your mind of a gross and fatal error, and restore you once more to my desolate heart, my loving arms! Remain here, Gertrude. I will return in a moment."

Mrs. Gildersleeve, without a word in explanation, hastened from the room. Gertrude never stirred from the spot where she stood, but with eyes fixed with a dread expectation on the door through which her mother had passed, motionless, silently awaited her return. The minutes flew by, but still Gertrude never moved, as if the bare suggestion of her mother's words had struck her to stone. Save for that terrible look of mute anticipation, and the repressed heaving of her bosom, she might indeed have been taken for a marble statue.

At length the door again opened, and Mrs. Gildersleeve, accompanied by a woman, closely veiled, entered the room.

"My dear Gertrude," she said tenderly, "I would willingly spare you a rude shock, if I knew any better or surer method of arousing you from your delusion. This young woman, a convert like yourself to the Church of Rome, has come here out of the kindest and friendliest motives. You have never seen her before, but she has heard much of you, and is most anxious to do you a service for which I am sure you will live to thank and bless her."

She motioned to the new-comer, who at once drew nearer and removed her veil, disclosing the pretty, but now deeply-saddened countenance, of Rose Delaney.

Gertrude gazed at Rose with a look of pained apprehension; then, as a sudden suspicion flashed upon her mind, she turned to her mother, quickly, and said,—

"Mamma, who is this woman? Surely, you would not stoop to a cruel deceit—"

But Mrs. Gildersleeve intuitively comprehended what Gertrude meant, and answered before she could finish the sentence:—

"No, my child. I am convinced of Mrs. Delaney's truth, and when I tell you that your old friend, Mr. Jerks, will also vouch for it, I think you will no longer injure me by an unjust suspicion. Mrs. Delaney's story is a very sorrowful and a very painful one. But I beg that you will patiently listen to what she has come so far to relate to you."

Gertrude made a step forward, and laid her hand beseechingly upon her mother's arm.

"Dear mamma," she faltered, with a look of piteous entreaty "Do not subject me to this trial. Please send this woman away. I do not doubt that she means me well. But I have no desire to listen to any story. It would make no difference what she said. I—I am not feeling very well, dear mamma"

"But, Gertrude —"

"Nay, then," cried the young girl, roused to sudden frenzy by her secret apprehensions, "*I will not* listen to her! Go away! Go away this instant!" she added, almost fiercely turning upon the shrinking Rose. But the next instant, surprised and ashamed at herself for an exhibition of passion so utterly foreign to her gentle manner, she threw herself into her mother's arms and burst into tears.

At the sight of Gertrude's distress both Mrs. Gildersleeve and Rose Delaney were stricken with feelings of remorse.

"Had we not better defer this unpleasant matter for another occasion, madam?" said Rose.

But Mrs. Gildersleeve shook her head decidedly.

"My daughter will be calmer in a moment," she said. "Come, Gertrude, my dear child, compose yourself. Sit down here beside me"—and she led her to a lounge—"and listen to Mrs. Delaney. I promise you that you cannot fail to be deeply interested in what she has to say."

Gertrude's mood had changed. Until Father Titus began to plant the seed of his pernicious influence in her heart, she had been docile and obedient to the slightest wish or desire expressed by her mother. Now, once more, she yielded to her mother's commands, and faintly signed for Rose Delaney to proceed with her tale.

There is no need to rehearse that sad and sinful experience. The reader is already familiar with the true character of Father Titus. The delicate mind of Gertrude was shocked by the recital, and at first she could only utter broken ejaculations of horror and disbelief. Father Titus such a monster as this woman depicted?

No! She would not, could not entertain the thought! It was all a piece of deception, a conspiracy, hatched up to throw discredit on a good and holy man; a wicked, cruel conspiracy, devised as a means to make her revolt from a religion that could harbor and exalt to one of its highest offices, one so wicked, so shameless, so utterly vile and worthless!

But as Rose went on, as she unveiled and exposed circumstantially the nameless details of her connection with the priest, investing her recital with an unmistakable air of truth, Gertrude slowly, — and oh! with such unutterable grief and despair! — was forced to realize that he whom her imagination had raised to a plain with the holiest of the holy, with the noblest and worthiest that had lived on earth, who had made good deeds, pure life, and unquestioning faith, stepping-stones to the most exalted places on high, was but an image of clay, — one of the lowest, the vilest of earthly beings!

Slowly, reluctantly, resisting to the last, did this conviction force itself upon her, and then with a wail, that was prolonged into a startling shriek, she sprang up and then as suddenly sunk upon her mother's breast, completely senseless.

Days and weeks went by, but Gertrude Gildersleeve, despite the constant attendance of skilled physicians, never awoke to sense and reason. She lingered for a while, but with the withering of the summer roses her pure and gentle soul took its flight, leaving her mother heart-broken and desolate, — now, alas! indeed childless.

But not destined to be childless for long! The mysterious providence of God, which perchance as a just punishment had deprived her of every member of a once-promising family, had at last raised her up from the dark pit of despair, given to her hungering heart a new affection, assuaged her sorrow by the love of one whom she had once cast off, but now thankfully, gratefully received into her arms and her home, — the wronged but forgiving wife of her son Frank, — Minnie Marston. And thus we leave them.

CHAPTER XL.

LAST NIGHT ALIVE. — FATHER TITUS'S TRAGIC END.

Father Titus, with his spies in the Gildersleeve household, was promptly informed of the events that had happened at the country seat, closely following upon his interview with the young girl, the result of which had thrown the Gildersleeve household into a state of dismay and consternation; for during the conference Gertrude had been suddenly stricken down, and the physicians pronounced her recovery hopeless. Such was the report that Father Titus had received.

The priest had returned to Boston and was indulging in his usual evening occupations; that is to say, he had assumed his comfortable dressing-gown and embroidered slippers, had put on his tasseled smoking-cap, and seated in his stuffed easy-chair, with a fragrant Havana in his mouth, a decanter of brandy handy at his elbow, was preparing to enjoy the earned repose of a day spent in active labors.

A complacent smile rested on the priest's countenance. He felt all that calm contentment of a man who sees plan after plan, scheme after scheme, ripening to a sure fruition, and from the habit of continued success, not once taking into account the hazards of sudden blight or nipping frost withering his buds of promise.

Already in his mind's eye he beheld his pet project rapidly approaching the desired end. Gertrude Gildersleeve, the presumptive heir to a vast property, with only her mother's life-dower between her and its absolute possession, was completely and inextricably under his influence.

Now, all that remained was to precipitate Gertrude into taking the final step; to throw herself into the ever-extended arms of the church, and consecrate herself by an irrevocable act to its service forever.

That act would compel the renunciation of all worldly wealth, and likewise include its endowment to the church. Not for an instant did Father Titus entertain a doubt of this happy consummation. His last interview with Gertrude had swept away every fear, every anxiety.

Such was his frame of mind when his servant Patrick came into the room bearing a letter. The handwriting at once told him that it was from his trusted tool. He tore the letter open. The com-

placent smile faded from his lips. His smooth brow became wrinkled and corrugated. The firm hand which held the paper shook as if with sudden palsy. He dashed the letter upon the floor, passionately stamped upon it, then again picked it up, smoothed it out, and once more read its contents.

No; there was no mistake! it was not so much what the missive contained as what it failed to convey, that struck him a blow that was almost mortal. He read between the lines, and saw at once the proud fabric he had so laboriously, so cunningly constructed, come tumbling to the ground!

And worse! Who was this mysterious veiled woman, spoken of by the writer of that fatal letter? This woman who had imparted to Gertrude Gildersleeve some secret knowledge which his spy had been unable to learn? And what the nature of that communication? What direful tale, what hideous revelation had been poured into his convert's ear, that should have such a withering, blasting effect?

His guilty fears suggested a terrible suspicion. He had seen less of the Delaneys of late. Rose no longer came to confession. The mysterious woman who had sought Gertrude Gildersleeve must have been Rose Delaney! He did not try to comprehend the motive; he cared nothing for it; it was sufficient to know the appalling fact that Rose had gone to Gertrude with the story of her shame and of his infamous guilt!

All the terrible consequences of exposure stared him in the face. He even forgot the blow to his ambition, the loss of Gertrude's heritage, in the overshadowing dread that he would be held up to public contempt, that the church would be scandalized and visit him with its severest penalties, that he would be torn from his high pedestal, and perhaps even fall a victim to the sanguinary vengeance of an implacable husband.

He sprang from his chair. Under the weight of all this threatened disaster, what wonder if for the time Father Titus was no longer a responsible, rational being? What wonder if, desperate, wild, half-crazed, seeing the mountain of his sins about to fall upon him, he should rush to his chamber, a deadly purpose animating his heated brain?

Upon a table near his bedstead stood a small medicine-chest. This the priest threw open. With agitated fingers he selected a small cut-glass vial, containing a colorless liquid. Unscrewing the top of the vial he poured a few drops of the liquid into a glass, to

which he added some water. Then he set the vial back in its place, shut the chest, and raising the glass in his hand, looked steadily at its crystal-clear contents.

"Ah! thou potent elixir!" he said. "If I were only as sure thou couldst charm the *soul* to eternal slumber, as I know thou canst the body!"

He put the glass to his lips.

But some qualms still appeared to restrain him from his desperate purpose.

"Bah! let me be bold!" he muttered in self-contempt. "If I delay I shall lose courage! Am I coward as well as fool? No! I have nothing left to live for. Life offers nought but broken hopes, self-condemnation, the sneer of those I despise, or worse still, the pity of those I hate! Death is nothing. There can be no protracted struggle between soul and body after taking this quick-acting drug. It strikes like the knife or the bullet, at the very seat of life; rather, like the lightning stroke, annihilating with a flash! Dying! The parting with loved ones — with father, mother, wife — I have none! none! why then do I pause? Surely it is easier to die than to face ignominy, scorn, reproach! It is but a plunge, and all is over. Welcome then, grim shadow! Welcome then, death!"

His face was frightfully pale, but his hand no longer shook. His iron will had braced itself to perform its most terrible act!

Again he placed the glass to his lips, then snatched it away, and set it down upon the table. A thought born of a sudden hope, dispersing as with a breath all the philosophy he had invoked to assist him to perform the awful deed, had suddenly given him pause.

"Ha! A mere suspicion after all!" he cried. "I was about to play the fool with a vengeance! What if Rose had never seen Gertrude Gildersleeve! Holy Mother! Have I gone mad! At least I will wait and know the truth from her own lips."

He went to a desk, hurriedly wrote a few lines upon a sheet of paper, then rang the bell at his bedside. Patrick appeared in answer to the summons.

"You know where Mrs. Delaney lives," said the priest. "Take this note to her. Give it into no hands but hers. Wait until she has read what I have written, and get her answer. If she refuses to do what I have requested, tell her that I am very sick, — nay, dying! Stop at no subterfuge, no sophistry, no denial. Get her to come back with you at any hazard. Fail not! Do you hear?"

"Faith and I do, yer riverence! And sure, sure it's not that ye

be a dyin'!" said Patrick in great alarm, and now first noticing the priest's pallor.

"Far from it," said Father Titus, with a wintry smile. "I have always found you faithful, Patrick. You have kept to yourself such secret matters as I have from time to time intrusted you with. Your fidelity I shall not forget. Go now, and do as I have bidden you."

The man departed, and Father Titus seated himself to await the result of Patrick's mission. He fixed his eyes on the dial of the mantel-clock, and tried to concentrate his thoughts solely on the movements of the minute hand; or rather, tried not to think at all! A stolid look settled over his face. It might have been hours that he sat there, for all the note of time he took. At last he started at hearing a door open. He arose quickly, passed into the outer room, and found himself face to face with Rose Delaney.

She made a step backward on seeing him.

"He — he told me you were sick, dying, father," she faltered, with averted face.

He drew nearer to her, and sought to take her hand; but she shrank shudderingly away from him.

"Oh!" she murmured, weeping, "I would not have come here if — if —"

And here she broke completely down, unable to say more.

"Is it indeed so, Rose?" said the priest, folding his arms, and looking sadly upon the cowering figure before him, "What has happened, may I ask, that has induced this strange behaviour toward me?"

"Oh! father, do not ask me, I pray, but let me go away at once," said Rose, hysterically.

"Nay, I insist on your answering," said the priest, sternly.

"My — my husband," sobbed Rose.

"It is as I suspected, then! Rose Delaney, have you made a confession to your — your husband?"

"Oh! forgive me, father. I could not help it! He — he wrung it from me. It was not my fault!"

"And in the face of your solemn oath — in spite of that vow, with all its dread penalties — you have dared to breathe this matter into another's ear?"

"Forgive me, father; forgive me!" was all the frightened Rose could say.

"Forgive you!" thundered the priest, giving way to an irrepressible burst of passion. "Rather will I call down upon your head the curses of —"

"Spare me, father!" shrieked Rose, in her terror at this awful threat, clutching at his uplifted arm in frantic supplication.

"Spare you, unhappy girl!" repeated the priest, his manner changing, and letting his arms fall listlessly to his side, while his head dropped in deep dejection. "Oh! Rose! What have you done? Do you know that you have slain me?"

But Rose, struggling with contending emotions, had now lost all power of speech.

"And not content with one confession," continued the priest, his mood again changing, "you dared seek one who placed implicit trust in me, — you dared go to Gertrude Gildersleeve, and pour this poison into *her* ear! Speak! Did you do this?"

Rose, terrified, and feeling now again the powerful influence of the priest, sank at his feet, grasped at his garments, moaning piteously, —

"I could not help it, father! Spare me, oh! spare me! John made me do it; he compelled me to go down there, and I had no power to resist!"

The priest clasped his hands before his face. A deep groan burst from his lips.

"It is all over!" he said to himself.

After a moment he seemed to make an effort to command himself, and raising the kneeling woman to her feet, he asked, in a strange, husky voice, —

"Where is your husband, Rose?"

She gave him an uneasy look.

"I — I do not know, father," she said, hesitatingly.

"He went to New York day before yesterday. Why did he go there?"

"He — he said he was going on business."

"Business!" exclaimed the priest, incredulously. "But let it pass. Rose, what did your husband say, how did he act, when you made this confession to him?"

"At first I thought it had killed him, father. Then he raved like a madman. At last he rushed out of the house. It was late and I sat all night trembling in my chair, waiting for him to return, and fearing everything terrible. But he did not come back until long after daylight. He had walked the streets all night long!"

"What did he say when he returned!"

"Oh! oh! Do not ask me!" implored Rose.

"I command you to tell me!" said the priest, sternly.

"Well, he said he had reconsidered his first intention. He had changed his mind."

"What was his intention when he rushed out of the house? Nay, Rose, you must and *shall* tell me all!"

"He—he said his first impulse was to come here and—and kill you, strike you dead!"

"Ah! Well, go on."

"Afterward his brain cooled. He thought of another way that would, as he expressed it, be a much harder punishment for you to bear. He—he went down town, dragging me with him. Oh! father, believe me when I tell you I was not to blame! I besought and prayed him not to do it."

"Where did you go, Rose?"

"To a lawyer's office."

"Ha! ha! To a Protestant lawyer, of course!" ironically exclaimed the priest. "Well, what happened there?"

"Oh, father! They compelled me to repeat the—the whole confession."

"Ha!" again exclaimed the priest, his hands working nervously, his face as pale as death. "And the lawyer wrote down what you said, then read it all over to you, and you signed the document? Am I correct?"

Rose dropped her eyes, but made an affirmative sign. For some minutes no words were spoken. The breathing of the two could be distinctly heard, Rose's respiration rapid and fluttering, like that of a wounded bird in the hand of the fowler; the priest's breast laboring with deep, stertorous gusts, evincing the terrible agitation that oppressed him.

At last Father Titus sunk down into a chair. His head dropped upon his breast.

"Oh! my God!" he murmured, forgetful of the presence of another in the room. "Thy thunderbolt has found me! Oh! is there no refuge, no hope of escape? No, alas! none!"

Then suddenly aware that Rose was still present, he raised his head, and pointing to the door, said in singularly gentle tones,—

"Go, my child. I will not keep you longer. Would to heaven I could assist you in this your time of trial. But no creature on earth is now so powerless as I am. You have made me less than the humblest scavenger of the streets!"

"Oh! father! father!" sobbed Rose, her heart torn at the sight of his utter misery, her eyes brimming with tears.

He motioned her away, but not harshly.

"Leave me, Rose. I have much to do, much to think of."

"Bless me, father," sobbed Rose, throwing herself at his feet, and clasping his knees. "Say that you forgive me before I go!"

He placed his hands upon her head, then tore them away with sudden horror.

"No! no!" he exclaimed. "It would be an act of profanation, of blasphemy! I forgive you, my child, fully, freely. But for heaven's pardon, seek that in your closet on your bended knees! Go now, my child. Farewell! Farewell!"

Slowly, sorrowfully, Rose Delaney retired; she paused at the door, turned one last, lingering look on the bowed figure of her destroyer; and then Father Titus was alone. An hour passed. Suddenly throughout the house there resounded a dull, heavy shock, seeming to come from the apartments of Father Titus, and accompanied by a cry so shrill and piercing that it startled every inmate of the parsonage.

A frightened throng of priests, curates, and domestics came hurrying from the adjoining rooms. They crowded in speechless consternation round the prostrate form upon the floor, which was writhing in horrible convulsions. He was lifted upon the bed, and still conscious, despite his awful distress, managed to articulate, —

"Send for —" He whispered a name, and then continued, "Send for him, for I am dying, and to no other can I confess!"

They hastened to do what the dying priest wished, and soon a man of august presence, whose usually mild eye now flashed with the masterful energy of one accustomed to meet great emergencies, hastily entered.

With a wave of his hand he cleared the room. Then he bent over the dying man.

"Father, are you conscious?"

A gesture signified assent.

"Have you reason to believe that you are near your last hour?"

"I — am — dying," murmured Father Titus, making an extreme effort to speak,

"Have you strength to undergo confession, and receive the last rites of the church?"

For answer, the priest pointed to a table on which was a glass and a decanter partially filled with wine.

The other, understanding the motion, and recognizing the extremity of the case, poured out a glass of the wine and held it to the dying man's lips.

Now revived, Father Titus unburdened his soul of its doleful weight. His last words were so faint that the priest was obliged to bend down his ear close to the lips of the dying man.

These last words, feeble and broken, and given with an expiring effort, were, —

“Father, for the sake of our Holy Mother Church, let not this scandal ever come to the knowledge of the world! There are ways to stop babbling lips. There are means —”

The listening priest gave an assuring answer, and then, at a signal from Father Titus, proceeded to administer extreme unction, — the last solemn ceremony to comfort and speed the parting soul.

Ten minutes later Father Titus breathed his last.

CHAPTER XLI.

FUNERAL OF FATHER TITUS. — VICTIMS OF SINNERS IN BROAD-CLOTH.

Father Titus was the Richelieu of New England. Politician and priest. Richelieu with his niece, or perhaps a bevy of nieces. The spider who wove his meshes in the dark. Who laid his wires while Protestants were asleep. Whose secret spies answered him day and night, as by telephone. The great opposer of secret societies, yet secret societies' chief champion. How is he to win? By making war on every other sect. No alliance, no compromise. Combine with infidelity to put down orthodoxy. Drunk or sober, no temperance society without the priest. No prohibition, by any means. If Wendell Phillips will flatter the Irish and condemn English Protestants, then praise him, cheer him to the echo. If he will lecture on Daniel O'Connell, and do it free gratis and for nothing, give him a crowded house. Let applause burst forth from pit to dome in praise of the “generous, noble-hearted, silver-tongued orator.” But if Wendell Phillips stands for governor, and solicits Irish votes, then scratch off his name. Prohibition don't go down the Celtic throat. Whiskey does!

Liquor-sellers have votes, they know their friends. Gamblers have sympathies, they go where best dealt with. Politicians know when and whom to flatter. Pay well at a lottery fair, and you win the election. On Sunday high mass in the morning, and “hi! hi! hi!” in the afternoon. After mass, streams of men flow to the nearest rum-shop like ducks to the water. Open bar on Sunday and a

hundred drinks in an hour. Fifty in twenty minutes. This by actual count.

How to retain power? Give a sop to liberalism. Let Beacon Hill play bob to the Vatican kite for sake of the spoils of office. Share the "divvy." By and by this pandering to skepticism kills the goose that lays the golden egg. Infidelity is the nursed dragon that bides its time. Woe to it when its sins are laid bare, and the day of reckoning comes!

Father Titus saw that Boston's nine millions of taxes were to be fingered by somebody, and who would do more good with the money than the Catholics? Who could better help the church? Who could more conveniently drop a million or two, now and then, into the hands of the church? What though moneyed men groan at the heavy taxes and move off to Newport, Nahant, and the country? Their real estate, their banks and buildings, are here, let them pay for the great criminal and pauper army, also for street laborers and church voters.

What though the State interferes to prevent Boston's deeper debt? Why, then, raise the valuation, water the stock; tell the assessors to mark high; a few millions must be had. Boston is superior to the State, an independent province. No unpopular law can be executed in Boston unless by Federal courts. Not even against obscene literature.

Let an orthodox bank defaulter be caught, and woe be to him; Loud his condemnation, and long his sentence. Let a Catholic take a few thousands and he has friends at court. Let sixteen hundred liquor sellers be arrested, and their cases are placed on file and never called. The district-attorney has more power than judge or jury. He is elected by criminal votes. He condemns and he acquits at will. Let the biggest gamblers, the biggest lottery men, and keepers of the most disreputable houses, be complained of, and the complaint will not get an airing. Excuse, "Want of testimony."

So Boston has not improved under the new administration of Beacon Hill and the Catholic church. Father Titus settled on Puritan soil to banish Puritanism from its chosen seat. And well has he succeeded. Boston has become the mart where Knock relics, holy water, indulgences, beads, blessings, and miracle wonders have a market value. Titus found Boston with but one Catholic church and one bishop. He lived to see it contain more than a score of churches, and become the seat of an archbishop.

Under his fostering care, churches, institutions, schools, secret societies, convents, orphan asylums, arose as by magic. A Moses

of the Irish race, he struck the desert rock of finance, and out gushed glowing streams of gold. Millions uncounted flowed like a river through his hands. One Catholic tells me that he handled \$900,000 in money for building one church edifice. Bundles of greenbacks, gifts from various congregations, were piled on the floor several feet high. How much were spent on luxurious nieces, *dame d'amour* pianos, furniture, horses, carriages, cigars, wines, brandies, palace-car travels, and trips to Europe, no mortal will ever know. That matters not so long as he won laurels to the church. He was decked with all the honors of the church, and buried in her most holy sepulchre.

Magnificent was Father Titus's funeral. Long processions of church officials and State dignitaries swelled the concourse. Consecrated bells spoke the voice of wailing as they tolled, tolled, tolled the solemn knell, giving forth the sad tidings with emphasis that a "great man in Israel has fallen."

Plumes decked horses and hearse. The church was hung in mourning; walls, doors, windows, pulpit, and chancel were heavily draped in black. Dirges filled the sanctuary, requiems of high mass were responded to with sobs and tears. Candles blazing from altar, ceiling, and catafalque lighted his departed spirit from earth to heaven. Eulogies were pronounced, lauding to the skies his piety and his virtues. Amidst clouds of incense, prayers, dulcet symphonies and laudations, his soul tarried for a time to bid farewell to earth, then, with the angelic escort, took its lasting flight to heaven. Ah! me! Who would not be a priest? Who would not die in the bosom of the church?

Weeping around that bier in jewelled attire were several of his and other priestly victims. Some had lost their beauty, assumed family relations, and buried the past. Some, alas! were not there, they had been buried in the tomb. Some were buried in that living tomb the convent. The oath of secrecy, a hundred-fold more binding than oath to Deity by civil magistrate, had held their lips sealed.

To Father Titus they had yielded as to a divine being. He appeared as a demigod. His noble physique, great magnetic nature, was captivating, irresistible. He stood as God's vicegerent. He assumed the prerogative of heaven by absolving sins on earth. But wasps may slay an elephant. So the caresses of a few fair maidens may plant the stings that shall kill a priest. They had been taught that to "yield to the priest is to honor God. The priest can do no wrong, he can absolve all." No wonder those present were filled with horror at seeing their idol so suddenly struck down.

Rose Delaney was among the number who wept the loudest. Her heart was crushed as if in widowhood. Father Titus's rich gifts of jewelry, dresses, shawls, were still in her possession, costly ornaments still graced her person, and the magic ring inscribed "Titus to Rose," still adorned her delicate finger.

Among all his female victims only one dared to make oath to his crimes. Dared to swear to the truth in spite of the church. Dared its threats and maledictions. Dared to break the oath that binds for time and eternity. The victim who reveals the crimes of a priest may be forbidden even to die. Must walk the earth a ghost of despair, amid cursings, whirlwinds, fiery flames, shadows and groans. Purgatory would be a haven of rest, hell itself a coveted relief. Such is the story told me by one of the faithful.

One female, however, dared Father Titus to meet her in open court. She swore to years of continued intimacy and of most flagrant adultery. A suit was brought by her husband, damages laid high, but the case was settled by paying a few thousand dollars, and the matter was hushed. The newspapers were all silenced, and the writ, though served, was never recorded. Such is the power of the church to conceal.

Now let a poor Protestant clergyman fall into crime, and the papers jump at the scandal. They gloat with affected horror at the sight, and blaze with lugubrious lamentations.

At the same time, a Catholic priest may be incarcerated for days in the lock-up, and nothing is said by the press. The public to this day may be wholly ignorant of the fact. Fair play! Fair play! Oh, ye gentlemen of the press, give us fair play! Though we be weak in politics and small in the land of our birth, yet we ask at least justice.

"Why, Mr. Morgan, you will offend your best friends."

No, no, they know me too well. They know my motives, and my object. The true Catholic even wants to see the priesthood reformed, and the church purified.

"Well, how can the church be reformed?"

Ans. Not by powers within, but by powers without. If the bishop's seal holds the destinies of all men, then strike at the seal, strike at the crozier, the mitre.

"Then you would appeal to the pope."

No! As well appeal to a dead Napoleon. America says to all foreign potentates, "*Hands off.*"

"How then can you touch the mitre?"

By public opinion. *Vox populi, vox Dei.* Awaken a volcanic force that shall make the hand that holds the sceptre tremble in its grasp unless it yields to reform.





DER WERKER
IN DEN BRÄUEN, NEW YORK



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